THE PARASYNAGOGUE PARAGORIZED.

OR

A Parenetical confutation of the Epidemical Error, which affert-eth, Separation from Paro-chial Church-communion.

Demonſtrating

Their practice, who on the Lords day neglect the publick Exerciſes of Divine Worſhip in their Parochial Congrega-tions, and frequent (*cæteris paribus*) other Churches, to be Anti-ſcriptural.

By *John Leſly*, Miniſter of the Goſ-pel at St. *Michaels*, neer St. *Albans* in *Hertfordſhire*.

London, Printed by *Thomas Maxey*, in *Thames-ſtreet*. 1655.

1 Cor. 3. 4.

While one saith, I am of Paul; *and another, I am of* Apollo; *are ye not carnal?*

Clemens Rom.

Τίνες ἦν οἱ ταῦτα λέγοντες; Οἱ σύφλοι, καὶ πάσης κακίας πλήρεις.

Cyprian. de Lapsis.

Non jungitur Ecclesiæ, qui ab Evangelio separatur.

Basil. ad Amphiloch.

Οἱ παλαιοὶ ὠνόμασαν Παρεκκλησιαγωγὰς, τὰς ζωνάξεις τὰς παρὰ τῶν ἀνυποδέκτων πρεσβυτέρων ἢ ἐπισκόπων, καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἀπαιδεύτων λαῶν χειροθεσίας.

E. G. Friedell
APR 27 1931

1655 L 63

To the Honourable,
WILLIAM LENTHALL
Eſquire, Maſter of
the Rolls, &c.

Honorable, and Honored Sir.

A Sufficient Apology for my bold adventure of preſenting this part of my poor endeavors unto the publick view, may be an obſervation of the heathen; that when the Lord is pleaſed to viſit a Nation with the ſword, or the like judgment, then Νοσεῖ γὰρ τὴν Θεῶν, οὐδὲ τιμᾶσθαι θέλει; the worſhip of God

Eurip. apud Strab l. 11 pag 498.

God is weakened, and men will not honor him as they ſhould. Not ſo much for your particular inclination toward mee doe I make mention of your Name before this Treatiſe: as for that generall Conceſſion and Homologie, That the publick inferres the private benefit: In the *Ierem* 29 peace of the City, ye 7 ſhall have peace: For I feele my ſelfe no ſenſeleſſe member of thoſe bodies, which out of divers experiences challenge an intereſt in your Honours moſt favourable Integrity and Love, which you have alwaies borne to Gods Glory, Chriſts Goſpel, and all good Cauſes, where-

in

in you may bee charitable. The greateſt greatneſſe hath no greater Honour belonging to it, then to be an *Abrech* to Perſons, Bookes, and Cauſes of this Nature. Such Cedars have their ſpreadth and tallneſſe to ſhelter ſuch Fowles of the Heaven under their ſhadow. It was the pious reſolution of *Luther* in one of his Epiſtles; *Inveniar ſanè Superbus, Avarus, Adulter, Homicida, Antipapa, & omnium vitiarum reus, modo impij ſilentij non arguar, dum Dominus patitur*: That hee had rather be counted any thing, then bee accuſed of wicked ſilence in Gods cauſe. And

Gen.41.43.

Luther ad. Stanpit.

wee know, that the more diſhonoured and trampled upon any cauſe of Gods is, the more hee expects that wee ſhould appeare for it. Now leſt any man ſhould bring a bloud-ſhot eye, to make all appeare of a wrong colour; that I have made no particular Perſon my Aime or Adverſary, my witneſſe is in heaven, and my record on high. But becauſe loſſe of Salvation followeth obſtinacie in Errour, I have done my poore endeavour to proclaime Gods will. If any doe demurre, or obſtinately perſiſt, or reſiſt, they may remember they erre not

Job 16 19

Camero p. 286. *in fo lio.*

not without warning.

Common Ingenuity commandeth mee thankfully to acknowledge, what you have done for one, that hath no wittie Insinuations for extracting of your favours, nor Impudency enough to returne them in flatteries: yea, who had such obstructions betweene his heart and his tongue, that hee could scarce expresse the least part of his Thankfulnesse, much lesse is hee able to make you a requital.

But the Lord of Lords grant, that you may find all favour in the eyes of God and Man, that all true Happinesse

may be multiplyed upon you and yours, and crown you with eternity. So prayeth,

Your Honours obliged and humble Servant in the Lord,

JOHN LESLY.

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The Paraſynagogue Paragorized.

OR,

A Parenetical Confutation of the Epidemical Error, which aſſerteth, *Separation from Parochial Church-Communion.*

CHAP. I.

There is a Neceſſity of oppoſing Errors: and a ſpecial Neceſſity of oppoſing the Error of indetermined Church-communion.

§. 1. IT is the infinite Goodneſſe of the Lord, that *in wrath he remembers mercy:* For my part, I look upon it as a ſpecial mercy, that although we live in times, in *Hab. 3. 2.*

which the Truth is oppoſed and blaſphemed more then ever before; yet the Faithful have liberty to ſpeak and write in defence thereof. I wiſh that all orthodox Chriſtians (who have more leiſure, greater helps and endowments then their Brethren) had more zeal to improve this liberty for the advantage of the Truth; and to remember that it is wretched, in time of peace to be fierce as Lyons, but in the combate to be fearful like Harts. *Ambroſe*, as well as St *Paul*, had a great conflict for the Church of Chriſt. *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria* was blamed by many for his too ſlow confuting *Arius* his Hereſie. The Fearful, who are threatned to *have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone*, are they, *Qui veritatem Evangelii agnitam abnegant, aut profiteri nolunt, metu mortis vel amittendarum facultatum*; ſaith *Ravanel*. Who *deny* the known Truth of the Goſpel, or will not *profeſſe* it: Or, who at any time do evil, or omit good againſt the light of Conſcience, for fear of danger; ſay our learned Engliſh Annotators.

Tertull. de Cor. Mil. c 1
Ruff. Hiſt. l. 2. *c.* 11.
Sozom. l. 1. *c.* 14.
Rev. 21. 8
Rav. in voce Timidus
Matth. 10. 28, 33

tors. The Authors of moſt of theſe Errors and Blaſphemies which bewitch the ſouls of our people, are but little more to be blamed, then they that do profeſſe the Truth, (being endowed with gifts and helps) who ſuffer them to walk abroad without check or controule: It is but a ſlender diſcharge of our Duty, to cry out againſt Errors and Hereſies, and never to contend, nor convince men what Truth and Error is.

Mal. 2. 1,2 *Jude* 3. *Tit.* 1.9,11

§. 2. Though I meddle with no Controverſie but with great reluctancie and diſtaſte; yet now I am in a manner conſtrained, upon two conſiderations: which may be my Apologie for the publication of this imperfect Piece: Firſt, As mans *Intellect* naturally abhorreth Error, and a ſanctified man doth doubly abhor Errour in things Divine; ſo doth hee moſt of all abhor the corruption of the Vitals, and thoſe Errors which have a potent influence upon the Heart and Life, as this which I oppoſe moſt evidently hath: Miſtakes we all have, and ſhall have; but the more they ſtop the motions of the heart and hand,

Intellectus dominatur Appetitui. Scot. in 3. d. 33. *qd.* 4.

the more dangerous are they: The second is, The common excuse or argument of the Times, *Necessity*, and *Providence*: which how far they may justifie me, I must leave to the Judge of all men; being obliged as a Pastor, as a Friend, as a Christian, to tender my best assistance for relief of the Truth.

Doctrinae est species Eleemosynæ, Camero p. 90.

Though the crudity and weakness of this writing be such then, as should prohibit the publication, yet it may he useful to Country People, who most commonly are subject to this Error. Had I writ it for the use of the Learned, I would have tryed to make it fitter for their use; and if I could not, I would have suppressed it.

§. 3. The Shepherds part and duty is, to *defend his Flock* from Dogs, Wolves, Thieves; which if he neglected to do, he incurred the losse of his Office; according to the publick and ancient Canons of the Church. But if the Flock despising their Shepherd, do miscarry, they must thank themselves for it. When the beautiful Order of the Church is broken, then the Flock cannot but be endangered

Conc. Melevit. 2. cap. 24, 25. anno 416

Rev. 22. 11

1 Cor. 14. 38.

Ezek. 3. 27

Zech. 11. 10

dangered by Seducers; who ever corrupt the purity of Doctrine and Dicipline, and marre the beautiful face of the Church. The words of the Lord. Ezech. 1.38. *When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand*: These words should seem to Pastor and People, not so much words, as thunderbolts; and therefore unto the obstinate, Τοδὲ τοὶ καὶ ῥίγιον ἔσται, this Text will one day be terrible. For the Lord applyeth this threatning, not only to every particular impenitent person, but every negligent Pastor in the person of *Ezechiel*, that he may take to heart his duty, and his danger. The same charge is iterated, *Ezech.* 33.6. Signifying that Separatists from Church-Communion in their proper and Parrochial Congregations (in which they should take warning from their appointed Pastor) shall not escape punishment, though the Watchman be negligent; but if the Watchman

Homer Iliad.2

blow the trumpet, and the Flock or Sinner will not then come, and hear, and obey, he ſhall incurre double puniſhment. The Watchman then muſt anſwer for his part, for the blood of all that periſh through his default and negligence, to whom I ſay, as he in the Poet;

Homer Iliad.2. Δαιμόνι', ἦ σὲ ἔοικε κακὸν ὡς δειδιέναι; Wretched man, thou ſhouldſt not fear to tel men of their evil doing, and by conſequence of their Church-ſeparation.

§.4. Sinners are hardly brought to the ſight and ſenſe of their ſins: And therefore Paſtors muſt bring the ſins of their people upon the Stage, that they cannot deny them: as did the Prophets and Apoſtles. Better ſo, then for the people, (not knowing their ſin, that it is an horrible thing) to find how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. A Chriſtian, that hath not grace in him to reprove ſinners, is like *Salt that hath loſt his ſavour*: Μωρανθῇ, he is become fooliſh. For the unſavourineſſe of ſalt is (as *Euthymius* ſaith) *Debilitas mordacitatis ipſius*;

Hoſ.4.2.
1 Tim.5.20
Hoſ.6.10.
Heb.10.31.
Mat.5.13.

ſius; The weakneſſe of its acrimony. Wee have many examples of the Lords ſevere juſtice againſt them that ſwerve aſide in the leaſt things, from the ſtrict rule of his Word, that concerne his Worſhip, and follow their owne wills and inventions; though they have never ſo good a pretence for it: Tender hearts by judgements on others, are brought the more to fear God, leſt the ſame Judgements ſhould befall them: and to diſcerne, how failing about heavenly things (chiefly in his Worſhip) doth much incenſe Gods wrath.

2 *Sam.*6.7. *Levit.*10.1. *Act.* 5. 4. &c,

CHAP. II.

The late original of this Error: Some miſchiefs of it are indigitated. A Motive to reſiſt them.

§. 1 FIrſt it is to be underſtood, That the judgment and practice of ſome men of ſpecial account in the Church of God, hath been, that Separatiſts are unworthy the honor of any ſet Conflict, and publick Confutation; But Saint *Paul* in many places knew Satans method better: Satan ſeems ſomewhat ſhamefac'd at firſt, asks but ſome ſmall trifle; give him but that, he will be ready for greater points. If hee win ground in the Ceremonies, then he will abuſe the Sacrament. For when the Corinthians had ſit covered at Prayer a while, they grew even as unreverent at the Sacrament, which the Apoſtle was fain

1 *Cor.* 11. 16 *&c.*

fain to rebuke. Then we are to reprove leſſer Errors at firſt, as the Apoſtle did: We are to think the Wiſe mans counſel worth the following, *Ne ſit tibi minimum, non negligere minima.* Count it no ſmall matter, not to neglect ſmall matters. What ſo ſmall as an haire? When theſe ſmall hairs went from *Samſon*, his ſtrength left him. Moreover, leſt overmuch ſilence ſhould be interpreted, Conſent, or beget too great confidence in men of the goodneſſe of their cauſe, and others ſhould ſtumble at their vaunts; I would deſire the Reader, for his full ſatisfaction to peruſe learned *Camero*, *Mareſius*, *Vedelius*, Dr. *Ames*, Mr. *Rutherford*, Mr. *Blake*, and other reverend Divines: by whom he may be informed of his Duty in the danger of this ſin. For it is not my purpoſe at this time to diſcourſe, in what caſes it is lawful to ſeparate from a Church: much leſſe is it my buſineſſe to ſpeak of the incredible and deteſtable Church ſeparation, practiſed by Atheiſts, Epicures, Hereticks, Libertines, &c. in theſe times,

Seneca.

Judg. 16. 19

Cam. p. 322. *in fol.* *Mareſ. Coll. Theol. d.* 17. *Sect.* 9. *Ved. Arc. Arm. part* 1 *l.* 2. *c.* 1. *Amef. de Conſc. l.* 5. *c.* 12. *Ruth. Due Right p.* 229. *&c.* *Blake Cov. c.* 31.

Jude 19. *Who walk after their own ungodly lusts, and separate themselves, being sensual, having not the Spirit:*
Pro. 13. 13. *Whose judgement lingreth not, nor their damnation slumber.* But my business is to admonish those, who
2 Tim. 3. 5. profesſe they know God; *Having a form of godlinesse, but in this deny the power thereof: That the Lord might give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.*

§. 2. This premised: This Error of Church separation, is by birth and Original, like unto Israel in her worst condition: e-
Jer. 2. 14. ven Οἰκογενὴς, a Home-borne slave; called by the Latines, *Verna*; i.e. *Vere vilis natus*, of a vile Original. Among the Heathen it was a reproachful disgrace, to worship their gods with any new Adoration. And for that very thing the Athenians ἐπωμφδήθησαν, were bitterly jeered by their Comicks; and particularly *Demosthenes* reproved *Æschines*, saith *Strabo*. Wee then should fear, that vengeance denounced against the final impenitency of Revolters in Religion, doth not only concerne A-

Strabo Geogr. l. 10 p. 471.

postates

poſtates, openly denying Chriſt; but, as *Fulgentius* well noteth, him alſo, *Qui ſilentio firmat errorem*, who by ſilence confirmeth any Error, and by holding his peace doth not confirme the Truth: *Divinam contumeliam qui non refutavit, acumulat*: He that repelleth not Gods diſhonour, (what he poſſibly can) addeth to it. The negligent or ſleepy Centinel betrayeth his Princes Tent. And now, leſt here I ſhould ſeem ſingular, I will expreſſe the degenerate Birth and Nativity of it, in the words of learned *Honorius Reggius*, who hath collected a hundred and eighty Errors (out of Mr. *Edwards* his *Gangrene*, and other late Writers) practiſed in *England*, ſince the year 1640, and communicated them unto forraign Nations: of which this is the 125 Error; *Partem Libertatis Chriſtianæ eſſe, non audire proprium Miniſtrum; ſed ubi libeat, & à quo plus commodi ſperetur*: That it is a part of Chriſtian Liberty, not to hear our own Miniſter; but to hear where one liketh beſt, and from whom we hope for moſt profit.

Fulgent. ad Thraſ. l. 1.

Luk. 9. 26.

Honor. Reg. de Statu Eccleſiæ in Anglia. p. 95.

§ 3. The

§ 3 The miſchief of the practice I here oppoſe, lieth not in the bare error of judgment, but in the unchriſtian Diviſion and Alienation which thence floweth, contrary to the Humility and Love, which is the viſible character of Chriſtians. Alas, the hideous Doctrines, the contemned Ordinances, the unheard of wickedneſs that this Doctrine hath produced! the reproached and ſlandred Miniſters, the weak that are ſcandalized, the Profeſſors apoſtatized, the Profane hardned, the Enemy inſulting; all theſe do deſcribe it more plainly to us, then words can do, and cry aloud in the ears of God and good men. Hence is all this Atheiſm amongſt us, in denying or not having a God; this Apoſtaſie, in drawing back and eſtranging our ſelves from God: this Profaneneſſe, in refuſing the Creator, that we may enjoy the Creature. How fruitful are we in monſtruous ſins, from the loweſt ſtep of Semi-ſeparatiſm, to the higheſt pitch of Rantiſm? Which ſhould produce all manner of Atteſtations to the Truth of Chriſt, againſt

Evagr. Hiſt l. 3. c. 14. in Henotico Zenon. Imp.

Epheſ. 2. 12. Heb. 10. 38 Hebr. 12. 16

againſt the Errors and Blaſphemies occaſioned by this practice. But if we cannot ſee it at home, we may hear of it from abroad; from the pens of Proteſtant Divines, making obſervation of the ſtate of the Church in *England*, who give this ſad, yet true report unto the world, That *England* in four years ſpace is become an heap and ſink of all Errors, Sects; no Province from the beginning of the world, ever brought forth in ſo ſhort a ſpace, ſo many monſtrous Hereſies, as this. Can any man name any age ſince the Apoſtles, among all the odious Hereſies that ſtill invaded the Church, that ever had ſuch open Maligners of the Miniſtry in general, and that ſtruck ſo ragingly at the very ſtanding of the Goſpel, as the Church-Separatiſts in this age have done, and ſtill do? and that in ſuch numbers? Nay, hath Chriſt any thing that he may enjoy unqueſtioned among us? As he may not have a Miniſter, ſo he muſt not an Ordinance; not a Day, not a Duty, not ſo much as his Deity among us. For Opinion once ſeeded in Error, ſhoots

Honor. Reg. de St. Eccl. in Angl. p. 1 Theologi Ceſtrenſ. in Atteſtatione ſua, Excuſa Anno 1648. Mareſ. in Diſp. aliquot. &c.

ſhoots out into Hereſie, and after ſome growth, in time into Blaſphemy.

§ 4 What then? Muſt a true Chriſtian ſtand by, and ſee the Cauſe of Chriſt, like a Foot-ball in the midſt of a crowd of Boyes, toſt about in contention, from one to another; and ſpurned about in the dirt, driving it on to the goal of their private intereſts and deluded fancies? Truly, it is not ſo eaſie for gracious diſpoſitions to turne off the publick calamities of Gods Church. Where is the policy (I ſay not Chriſtianity) of our times? Which ſhould mind us, that, *Calamitatum Reip. & Eccleſiæ eſt communio & viciſſitudo.* No man can do other, then loſe his private felicities in the common diſtreſſes of the Church. To avoid then all occaſions of publick Service for the Church under pretence of Humility or Recluſeneſſe, ſpeaks (too broadly) the deliquent Refractory. Your Anchoret, that digs his grave in Speculation meerly, and your Mole that is earthed wholly in an affected ſolitarineſs, are not liable ſo

Socrat. Hiſt l. 5. Prem.

ſo properly to obſcurity, as death. And we find an Apoplexy and Sleep no leſſe on their endeavors, then in their names. Indeed ſuch Silk-worms ſpin themſelves into Flies, diſanimate, heartleſſe Flies, living neither for Church nor Commonwealth. So that he that retreats at any Alarm or Summons of God for the common affaires of the Church, to enjoy himſelfe in his ſolitary ends, runs himſelf on the ſhelves of that rough cenſure of *Athanaſius*; *Vereor ne dum propter te fugis; propter alios ſis in periculo apud Dominum*: To ſtand by, and to give aime only whilſt others ſhoot, proclaimes thy lazineſſe, if not thy impotency. If therefore this thy mother implore thy aide (ſo *Auguſtine* counſels his *Eudoxius*) on the one ſide, hand not with Ambition; on the other, lean not to a lazie refuſal: Weigh not thine own idleneſſe with the neceſſities and greatneſſe of her burthens, to which (whilſt ſhe is in travel) if no good men will adminiſter their help, *Certe quomodo naſceremini non inveniretis*, God muſt then invent new ways for our new birth.

Athanaſius ad Dracont Part 2. Edit. ult.

Auguſt. Epiſt. 81.

CHAP.

CHAP. III

Parochial Church-communion is a Duty implanted by Nature, and a Moral and Solemn part of Divine Worship.

§ 1 AND here I profeſſe, and I would not ſay any thing, in which I am ſingular: I have ſo much childiſh fear, as ſcarce to dare to walk in publick where I am alone. The Topick therefore whence I intend (God willing) to raiſe my Reaſons, for a due and dutiful obſervation of Parochial Church-communion, ſhall be the ſame threefold cord, *Eccleſ.* 4. 12 with which *Tertullian* proſecuted another Subject: that is, according to Scripture, Nature, and Diſcipline. By theſe three I hope to demonſtrate, that Scripture enacteth this Duty for a Law, Nature.

ture eſtabliſheth it, and Diſcipline exacteth Obedience to it. As Nature, Scripture and Diſcipline are the Lords, (ſaith *Tertullian*) ſo whatever is contrary to them is not the Lords. Let that be unto thee Scripture, Nature and Diſcipline, which thou findeſt ratified by God; as thou art commanded, *To prove all things, and to hold faſt that which is good. Cui ex his conſuetudo opinionis profit, vel quis diverſæ ſententiæ color eſt?* What can cuſtom of opinion profit any of theſe, or what pretence is there for any contrary judgment? ſaith that Father.

Tertul. de Veland. Virg. c. 16.

1 Theſ. 5. 21.

And firſt I begin with the Teſtimony of Nature, becauſe God hath premiſed Nature to be thy Teacher, being afterwards about to ſend the Scripture, that thou mighteſt the more eaſily believe the Scripture, being firſt Natures Scholar; and whatſoever is againſt Nature, deſerveth by all men to be called a Monſter: but we will call it Sacriledge againſt God, the Lord and Author of Nature.

Tertul. de Reſurrect. Carn. c. 12. Tertul. de Cor. Milit. c. 5.

§ 2. That Honour and Reverence

rence, which is the proper Act of Religion, is due only to God, Nature teacheth.

Amesſ. de Conſc. lib.4 cap.1.

1. Becauſe it is the greateſt Honor that can be given to him.

2. It is the honor that is due to the ſole Lord of Life and Everlaſting Felicity.

3 Religious honour directly ſubmitteth, and ſubjecteth the ſoul and conſcience to the Lord alone.

4 In Religious honour God only is acknowledged to be our abſolute Lord, and to have abſolute right to require our Obedience.

Thus Nature teaching us that every Religious Act is due unto God; then Parochial Church-Communion, being a Religious Act, is a Natural or Moral Duty commanded by the Law of Nature. Now Moral or Perpetual (relating to a Law) ſignifies (in the Notation of the word) any Precept ſerving to regulate the Manners of men.

Sabbatum Redivivum part 1.pag.9

There are two kinds of Moral Lawes,; Moral-Natural, and Moral-Poſitive: which agreeing in Perpetuity

Perpetuity, do differ in their diſtinct Properties, as may appear by their ſeveral deſcriptions; which are theſe.

1 A Law Moral-Natural, is a Law of things neceſſary to be done or forborn toward God or Man, our ſelves or others; which the nature of man now (though corrupt) either doth acknowledge or may at leaſt be convinced of to be ſuch (even without Scripture) by Arguments drawn from thoſe Principles, which are now in the hearts of all men generally.

2 Lawes Moral-Poſitive, are Lawes clearly laid down in Scripture (in words expreſſe, or certain conſequence) which Nature, though corrupted, cannot reaſonably deny to be Juſt, Good, and ſo convenient to be perpetuated, according to the Law-givers pleaſure: though antecedent to his will, ſome way revealed to them, it would not, nor could have judged them to be of themſelves altogether neceſſary.

Naturæ majeſtatem recogitare, nulli frivolum videre poteſt. Tertul. de Teſtim. Animæ. c. 5.

The diſtinction of Moral Laws into Natural and Poſitive being clear in their deſcriptions, their agreement

greement is manifeſt in two things, beſides perpetuity.

1 In their Authority and force of Obligation; a Poſitive Law in force doth as ſtrongly bind the conſcience, as a Natural; *æquè*, though not *æqualiter*.

2 In their independance, both depend upon God, and not upon the will of man; and ſo are indiſpenſable by humane Authority. Theſe things premiſed, I conclude, that as all Solemn and Religious worſhip of God is Natural-Moral, ſo Parochial Church-Communion is a Duty implanted by nature.

§.3. But leſt I ſhould be thought to neglect (in effect) any other Solemn Worſhip, beſide this publick Worſhip in Church-Communion; (which the Ancients in ſevereſt manner did preſcribe and require) I will briefly declare, that all Solemne Worſhip is Moral-Natural, in all the parts thereof; and ſo, by conſequence, this Worſhip in Church-Communion. Though the nature of man be much defaced by the Fall of *Adam*, yet are there (as all men do acknowledg)

Concil. Gangren. cap. 5. & 6

ledg) ſome Principles of Religion found in every ſoul, which can never be blotted out: Among which there are theſe two moſt legibly upon the Tables of the heart.

1 That there is a God: which even the moſt barbarous people in all ages, and the worſt of Atheiſts have beene forced to acknowledge.

2 That this God muſt be worſhipped by all reaſonable Creatures, capable of his divine knowledg. This is that natural Homage and Alegeance due to God from all mankind, by the very law of Nature in their Creation; whereby they are bound to perform all Duties that he preſcribes to them, both with ſoul and body. Our life then regulated by nature, is the honour of nature; but things done againſt Nature do hinder the Solemn Worſhip of God, ſaid *Conſtantine* the great.

*Rom.*1. 20

1 *Cor.*6.20

*Euſeb.Orat ad Cœt. Sanct.c.*1.

§ 4 The Worſhip of God may be diſtinguiſhed into Ejaculatory and Solemn. Ejaculatory Worſhip is that which a man may tender unto God, either with the Heart

Heart alone, or with the Tongue alſo, in Prayer and Praiſes, even in the midſt of worldly imployments. To this kind of Worſhip every one is undoubtedly bound, as much as it is poſſible for us to perform it; and that, by thoſe general precepts which bind *Semper*, (as the Schools ſpeak) that is, on all opportunities; though not, *ad ſemper*, at all moments, without intermiſſion. But indeed it is both our ſin and our miſery, that in our ordinary Callings we ſeldom remember God, as we might and ſhould: it being too true of all in a degree, To forget God, and not to have him in our thoughts. Solemn Worſhip is the preſenting the whole man, ſoul and body together unto God. Now this Solemn Worſhip, is diſtinguiſhed into ſolitary, and conjoyn'd worſhip; which uſually, though not properly, is expreſſed by the terms of Private and Publick Worſhip; but we had rather call it Solitary, or Conjoyned, becauſe it is preſented to God, either by any one ſingular perſon alone, or by diverſ joyning together in the tendring of it.

Pſal. 1. 2. & 62. 8
1 *Theſ.* 5. 16, 17, 18
Pſal 10. 4

That Solitary Worſhip is a neceſſary

ceſſary Duty, appeares from the grounds of Nature. *Sabbat. Red part 1. c. 6. Sect. 12.*

1 It is altogether unreaſonable to imagine that God ſhould loſe any of his honour from any man ſingle, becauſe there is none other company to joine with him in the Solemnity of Worſhip.

2 It is likawiſe unreaſonable to think, that a man is not bound to ſeek the recovery of his ſouls loſt happineſs, in his enjoying God in duties of Worſhip, becauſe he is alone.

Next, Solemn Conjoyned Worſhip, is Domeſtical or Eccleſiaſtical.

That the Lord requires Domeſtical Worſhip from all ſuch jointly as live in Families, appears to be Moral-Natural, becauſe it being the Lord that hath placed men in a Community, it cannot be juſtly conceived, that he ſhould do this meerly for their worldly conveniences; but rather chiefly, that they ſhould improve their Society one with another to his Glory, who is the Lord of them altogether, as well as of every one of them ſingle; and ſo that they ſhould worſhip him jointly together as wel as each of them apart. *Pſal. 68. 6 Zech. 12. 12 Eſth. 4. 16 Exod. 12. 3*

5 Now

§ 5 Now all Eccleſiaſtical Worſhip is ſo aſſuredly of the Law of Nature, that all Nations, that have ever been heard of, have had their joynt Publick Solemn Worſhip; and have had Perſons ſet apart purpoſely for it. No man denyeth this, for no man is ignorant of that which nature freely doth ſuggeſt, ſaith *Tertullian*. Moreover, Reaſon and Experience declare, that the good of ſouls calls for Solemn Eccleſiaſtical Worſhip, and commends it, as abſolutely neceſſary and profitable: not only in that men are hereby yet more affected by a more general example, recommending the Worſhip of God; but alſo becauſe by the ſolemn Ordinances of Prayer, Preaching, Sacraments, Sabbaths, *&c.* multitudes are at once taught, minded of, and provoked to many Duties they owe to God and Man, better then their owne ſolitary thoughts or endeavours could ordinarily have attained to. And this ſo much the rather, becauſe of the gifts, which God to this purpoſe hath endued his Miniſters with (who by his appointment are ſet apart mainly for the pub-

Tertul. de Spectac. c. 2.

Sabbat. Rediv. part 1 c. 6. Sect. 15.

Publick Worſhip) exceeding thoſe which others have uſually or ordinarily: yet by the advantage of Publick Worſhip every particular perſon preſent enjoyes the benefit of the Miniſters gifts, for the Edification and Conſolation of every one, from whom it is not hid; and ſo may reap in one hour the ſtrength of that which hath been growing divers years, and feed upon that which hath beene gathering many dayes. This Eccleſiaſtick Worſhip is ſo natural to man, that *Tertullian* wondreth, How any man can ask for Gods Law, ſeeing it is written openly in the Creatures, and naturally in the Tables of Hearts, unto which the Apoſtle doth appeal, 1 *Cor.*11. 14. *Rom.*2.14. *&* 1.26,27.

2 *Cor.*4.23.

Tert.de Cor Milit.cap.6.

§. 6. This Eccleſiaſtical Worſhip, is either determined or indetermined.

That thing is ſaid to be Determined, which hath bounds and limits preſcribed. *Determinare, eſt terminos conſtituere,* ſaith *Ravanel.*

*Deut.*19.14 *Job* 14. 13.

As that Worſhip then may be ſaid to be Determined, which

is limited with certaine Circumſtances, and circumſcribed: ſo that may be ſaid to be indetermined, whoſe Adminiſtration and Performance, is Caſual, Occaſional, Accidental. The Philoſopher telleth us, That Circumſtances are the particular Conditions of ſingular Acts. Now circumſtances are determined in Scripture but in general, and left to Humane determination *in ſpecie*. Therefore *Aquinas* concludeth, That the conſideration of circumſtances, doth chiefly belong unto Divines; and that they make any Action either good or bad. And *Scotus* teacheth, That the Determination of a thing is twofold (oppoſite unto a twofold Indetermination) namely, a Determination unto Contradictories, or Poſitive Diverſities: and thence concludeth, that *Determinatio ad alteram partem Contradictionis ſtat cum indeterminatione ad diverſa.* And therefore the determination of Solemn Worſhip to Parochial Church-communion on the Lords Day, doth conſiſt with his Indetermined Worſhip at other times and

Ariſt. Eth. l. 3. c. 1.

Aquin. 12. 7, 20. & 18. 18. 30.

Scot. Sent. l. 1. d. 28. quæſt 4. n. 12.

and places on certaine occaſi-ons.

The ſum of all is, That Determined and Parochial Church-Communion, is a Duty implanted by Nature, otherwiſe it were not abſolutely a Moral-Natural Duty to worſhip God ſolemnly at all; for every ſuch Duty, which we by the Law of Nature owe unto God, cannot but be perpetually and univerſally poſſible to all; he being perpetually exiſtent and preſent with us, and we with him. And ſo by the Law of Nature it is Sacriledg againſt God, to ſeparate from determined Church-Communion, chiefly without cauſe. But I paſs from Nature to Scripture.

CHAP. IV.

All Christians are to joyne themselves to some particular visible Church, when the Lord offereth Occasion.

§ 1. MY second sort or kind of Reasoning against the Practice I oppose, is deduced from plaine Scripture. And here, though I might plead, as *Tertullian* did, *Scriptura negat, quod non notat*; That the Scripture denyeth that which it teacheth not: And seeing this practice hath no Scripture-warrant (for any thing that I ever yet saw or heard) the Practisers of it should fear that Woe denounced, not only against them that adde or diminish, but likewise that adulterate the sense of Scripture. For according to *Tertullians* Rule, the Scripture is as much wronged

Tert. de Monogam. c. 4.

Tertull. de Præscr. c. 17

wronged by perverting the ſenſe, as by corrupting the words of it. But to deal with them with their own weapons: Where is it ſaid, That you are not to joyne in a determined Church Communion, to hear your own Paſtor? Where are thoſe words written? If they anſwer, Negatives cannot be proved, To this we reply, And where is that ſaid? for we find it no where in Scripture, that Negatives cannot be proved. Yea, we find that Chriſt proved Negatives; for he proved, that himſelf was not a Spirit, That God was not to be tempted, &c. If Negatives are not to be proved, then Negatives are not to be believed. Ours is an Affirmative, which they yeild may be proved; theirs is a Negative, which they ſay cannot be proved: We then have the better of it; there is hope of proof on our ſide; theirs is deſperate. But though I might deſire them to prove their Practice by Scripture, yet becauſe with *Tertullian*, I adore the fulneſſe of the Scripture, I will ſhew their practiſe, who on the Lords Day neglect the publick exerciſes of Divine Wor-

Luk. 24. 39. *Matth.* 4. 7

Hooker Eccleſ. Politic. l. 2. *Sect.* 6.

Contra Hermog. c. 22.

ship in their determined Parochial Congregations, and frequent (*cæteris paribus*) other Churches, to be Anti-scriptural. Thus:

§ 2. First, all are to joyn themselves to a visible Church; either Formally to be a member thereof, or Materially by confessing the Faith of the true visible Church, when God offereth occasion.

1 Because we ought to be ready to give an answer or confession to every one that asketh, 1 *Pet.* 3.15.

2 Because *he who denyeth Christ before men, him also will Christ deny before his Father, and the holy Angels*, Mat. 10.33.

3 Because Christ hath promised his presence to his Churches, as he *walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks*, Rev. 2.1.

4 Because Faith cometh by hearing a sent Preacher, *Rom.* 10.24.

5 Because separation from a visible Church is condemned, *Hebr.* 10. 24. *Jude* 19. 1 *John* 2. 19.

6 Because the godly ever esteemed it a rich favor of God, to lay hold

hold on the skirt of a Jew; that is, to have any communion, even as a door-keeper in the House of the God, and have desired it exceedingly, and complained of the want thereof, *Psal.* 84.1,2,10. *Zech.*8.3. *Psal.* 27.4. *et* 42.1. *&c et* 63.1,2.

§ 3 Yea if any die without the Church, having faith in Christ, and want opportunity to confesse him before men, as repenting at the hour of death, their salvation is sure, because they are within the Church. So is that Maxime to be taken, *Extra Ecclesiam non est Salus*; None can be saved who are every way without the Church, Visible and Invisible; as all perished who were not in *Noahs* Ark. As for those who deny any being of a Church universal visible, I would learn of them into what particular Church the Eunuch was received, and by Baptism actually and solemnly admitted; or whether he was still no Church-member, but an alien and stranger to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, not admitted to the Church? And to what particular Congregation the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists joyned *Cam. de Ecc. p.272. in fol* *Mr. Blake Cov. cap.30. in fine.*

themſelves by Covenant ?

§ 4 There is then a neceſſity of joyning our ſelves to ſome particular viſible Church ; but it is not *Neceſſitas medii, ſed præcepti* ; It is not ſuch a neceſſity that all are damned who are not within ſome viſible Church. For *Auguſtine* truly ſaith, *There be many Wolves within the Church, and many Sheep without.* But if the Lord offer opportunity, all are obliged by his Commandment of confeſſing Chriſt before men, to joyn themſelvs to ſome Viſible-church: for all [illegible]

Auguſt.

Tert. de Idolol. c. 22.

Idolatry, in *Tertull.* [illegible] And he denyeth [illegible] with him, or for [illegible] viour teacheth [illegible] *is not with me* [illegible] *that gathereth* [illegible] that is, He t[illegible] ſelf to be on [illegible] There are nc[illegible] no man but h[illegible] Satans. As i[illegible] eth not for his P[illegible] As they which are [illegible] Maſters harveſt, if the[illegible] are ſcatterers and deſtroyers [illegible] they that will not defend Chriſts honor

Eng. Annot on Mat. 12. 30.

honor, at leaſt profeſſe and confeſſe it (wherein they can) betray his cauſe, and are enemies. Yet there is a fellowſhip with the viſible church internal, of hidden Believers. In the *Romiſh Babel* this is ſufficient for ſalvation, *Neceſſitate medii.* But they want opportunity to joyne themſelves to the reformed viſible churches; yet do they ſin in the want of profeſſion of the Truth, and in not witneſſing againſt the Antichriſt; which is anſwerable to an adjoyning themſelves to a viſible [illegible] And ſo thoſe who do not [illegible] faith of the true viſible [illegible] Lord affording oppor- [illegible] Chriſt before men. [illegible] fellowſhip is ne- [illegible] *ſſitate Præcepti*: [illegible] aciouſly pardon [illegible] ity in his own, [illegible] perſecution, of- [illegible] Chriſt.

Rutherford Due Right of Presbytery. c. 5. Sect 5. p. 78

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Auguſt.

Tert. de Idolol. c. 22.

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Rutherford Due Right of Presbytery. c. 5. Sect 5. p. 78

CHAP. V.

We are bound to Hearing in our own determined Congregations, Neceſſitate Præcepti.

§ 1. SEcondly, Howſoever we be not bound unto hearing in our own Congregations, *Neceſſitate Medii*, as if Gods grace were tyed to the Meanes this way: Yet *Neceſſitate Præcepti*, we are, if we conſider Gods Commandment: In no other way can we expect the Lords ordinary preſence, promiſe, and acceptance: See *Heb.*13.17. 1 *Theſſ.*5.12. It is a curſe, to be as *Sheep having no ſhepherd*, Matth. 9.36. that is, ſcattered abroad, not knowing where to get food, and expoſed to many Seducers, as people without a Paſtor. Ther[illegible]-deed a Scattering enforc[illegible] men are driven by vio[illegible]

*Pſ.*119.176
*Jer.*50.17.
Zach. 13.7

Gods ſervice, but that is not the ſcattering meant by our Saviour; but a voluntary ſtraying; when people are not willing only, but love to wander; as *Jer.* 14.10. a wandring out of ſelf-will; not a corporal, but a ſpiritual ſtraying, by which men of themſelves wander from God, and go aſtray from the way of Truth and Life; from thoſe wayes and courſes that God hath preſcribed them in his Word, and directed them unto by his Spirit: as they, Pſal.14.3.4 *Pſal.*58.3

§ 2. It is the Duty of all conſcientious Chriſtians to ſet themſelves under ſome particular Miniſter as their Paſtor, and to hear him conſtantly. Dr. *Ames* proves that this Ordinance of the Lord is the Duty of all Chriſtians; namely, to ſettle themſelves under ſome one particular Paſtor, and to joyne themſelvs to a determined or particular Church. *Ames. de Conſc. l.* 4. *c.*24. *quæſ.*3

1 Becauſe it is Chriſts inſtitution, *Matth.*18.17. in which there is a neceſſity, *Non Præcepti tantum, ſed & Medii*: He addeth five Reaſons more, which for brevities ſake I omit.

2 Be-

2. Becauſe every Flock muſt be under an Overſeer, *Acts* 20. 28. & 18. 23. If we be the flock of Chriſt, we muſt have a ſhepherd, who ſhall feed us in Chriſts ſtead.

3 Becauſe our perfection and edification dependeth ordinarily upon our particular Teacher, to which end Paſtors were given, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. and particular Guides, as *Philip* to the Eunuch.

4. Becauſe Paſtors are to preach conſtantly, 2 *Tim.* 4, 2. eſpecially on the Lords Day they ſhould not omit to preach Forenoon and Afternoon. Dr. *Ames* notes, that to the Sanctification of that Day, exerciſes of publick Worſhip in a Church, well conſtituted, and enjoying her Liberty, ought to bee held forth forenoon and afternoon. Halfe the Lords Day ſpent in Religion will not ſuffice to diſcharge from the ſecond due attendance on that Day: For if the Law of Nature determine for every worky-day of mans life, at leaſt a double attendance upon God, as neceſſary unto all men, much more on the Lords day. The continuance being not here

Ames: de Conſc. l. 4. c. 33. quæſt. 4.

Sabb. Red. part 1 *c.* 11. *Sect.* 5.

here determined, the ſervice may be ſo ſuddenly diſpatched, as nothing but want of will and Devotion can be aſſigned, as the cauſe of not tendring that double proportion on the moſt buſie day, that any man hath in his whole life.

§ 3. Furthermore, reverend Mr. *Collings* proves by four Arguments, that it is the duty of private Chriſtians, who have ſet themſelves under particular Paſtors, not to neglect them when they do preach. For, *Vindiciæ Miniſt. Evang. quæſt.* 5. p. 82.

1. To what purpoſe made they choice of him?

2. He hath a particular overſight over them committed to him, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12. *Hebr.* 13. 17, 24.

3 A Paſtors more eſpecial tye to his own Flock then another, (*Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.) argues that they are more eſpecially tied to him, and that he is appointed to feed them.

4 Chriſtians own Paſtors have a more ſpecial diſpenſation of the grace of God given them to themward, *Eph.* 3. 2. Of which more fully, *Chap.* 6.

Now

Now then, lay theſe together; Is it the duty of private Chriſtians, who have ſet themſelvs under their particular Paſtors, to attend divine Ordinances on the Lords day, delivered forenoon and afternoon? But ſee the times, Reader! It is lamentable to conſider the little uſe that is made of Gods Ordinances in moſt places; Preachers too often (I tremble to ſpeak it, or write it) be uſed like Poſt-horſes, ſpurred on till they be ſpent, and then a freſh is called for; in the mean time the world ſits ſtil, and thinks to be ſaved for hearing. Reader, mourn for this, weep for this; for this boads a Judgment; the Lord will ſurely reckon for the blood of his ſervants, ſpent, as well as ſhed. See *Nazianzen* his complaint, *Epiſt.* 31.

Dr. Harris, Peters Enlargm. in Prefat.

Nazian. ad Baſ.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

God assigneth unto every ordinary Pastor a portion of his people, to be instructed by him.

§ 1. THirdly, A Ministers Calling is termed in Scripture, *The Grace of God*; as *Rom.*1.5. *Ephes.*3.2. And it is so termed in a twofold respect:

*Rav. in voce Gratia. num.*3. *dist.* 3.

1. Because the designing to the Ministerial Calling is of grace.

2. And the faculty qualifying us for it, is from the free favour of God.

The Ministerial Function then hath these two properties:

1 It is founded in the free pleasure of God, *Gal.*1.15.

2. All the sufficiency which enableth any man to dispence the mysteries of the *Gospel*, it is the meer

meer grace of God, 1 *Cor.* 15.10. From theſe premiſſes I infer, That as God giveth Miniſters their Calling, ſo alſo their people, toward whom he will bleſſe their labours. It is true, the care of all the Churches was laid on the Apoſtle; but not ſo now: for whereſoever God now giveth a Miniſterial Calling, there he giveth a people, of whom the Miniſter may ſay, Towards you grace is given me of God.

2 *Cor.* 11.28

Bains ad locum.

This is Mr. *Bains* his obſervation on *Epheſ.* 3.2. That Chriſtians own Paſtors have a more ſpecial diſpenſation of the grace of God given them to them-ward. Whence he concludeth; This ſhould inſtruct people to depend eſpecially on thoſe who are ſet over them, for thoſe are they who are furniſhed from God in an eminent manner with grace towards them: They are fooliſh Pigeons that know not their owne Lockers; and fooliſh ſheep that know not their ſhepherds voice; and fooliſh people that know not their Miniſter.

§ 2. Hence then it is evident, That God aſſigneth to every ordinary Miniſter a portion of his people

ple. This is the difference between Ordinary and Extraordinary Paſtors. For ordinary Miniſters, the Lord commanded to faſten them to certain places; *Ordain Elders in every City*, Tit. 1. 5. And in the Councel of *Chalcedon* it is decreed, *Nemo ordinetur abſolutè*; Let none be Ordained at large, leſt he prove a wandring *Jonathan*. *Caranza* addeth three other Councels, that decreed a wandring Levite not to be admitted into communion: the reaſon is rendred by the Canoniſts, *Ne dicatur, Mendicat in palæſtra infelix Clericus.* Every Miniſter then muſt be ſeparated, authorized, and have allotted to him a certaine portion of people, which may bee inſtructed by him: which the diminutive Ποίμνιον, not Ποιμνὴ, may ſeem to inſinuate in the Scripture. Now as God giveth to every Paſtor his ſeveral Flock, ſo he will that we take pains in leading them. We muſt not Ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπειν, be Biſhops in other mens Dioceſſes, leſt God ſay, Who requireth this at your hand? When the Lord lighteth Candles, he findeth candleſticks on which

Conc. Chalced. c. 6. An. 451. Epaunen. c. 2. An. 515. Mogunt. c. 22. An. 829. Tribur. c. 27 An. 895.

to.

to ſet them; and when hee giveth a Calling, he giveth a people amongſt whom this Function ſhould be exerciſed, in whoſe conſciences (unleſſe they be ſeared) he giveth his Miniſter a peculiar report.

§ 3. Indeed if any come to our Congregations, as wanting their ſpiritual food by the Word and Sacraments, then it is good for a Miniſter to bee like a young woman (ſaith Mr. *Baines*) ſo full brefted that ſhee can both feed her owne child fat, and lend a draught to her neighbours. Eſpecially the Seales of the Covenant are not to be denyed to approved Profeſſors of another Congregation: for wee hold, all who profeſſe the Faith of Chriſt to be Members of the Viſible Church, though they bee not members of a viſible congregation; and that the Seals of the Covenant ſhould not be denyed them. But to let an itch of vain glory carry us ſo far, as to affect this that cometh from without, and be cold at home; this is to forget where our grace prin-

Baines ubi ſupra.

Ruther. Due Right of Presbyt. c. 4. Sect. 5. p. 185

principally lyeth. Miniſters are Stars, and the beſt ſhine is in our own Sphere. This I ſay not, as if it were not lawful in ſome caſes, to lend our labour elſewhere. For (due circumſtances conſidered) we may ſay as he, *Come help us in Macedonia.* And it was a cuſtome in the Primitive times (as *Clemens* teſtifieth) that if any Presbyter or Biſhop came to another, they ſhall be entreated to preach, becauſe it falleth out, as Chriſt ſaith, *A Prophet is not without honor, ſave in his own Country, and in his own houſe.*

Act.16.9

Conſtit.l.2. c.48.

Mat.13.57.

Paſtors then do warrantably performe Paſtoral Acts in other Congregations beſide their own:

Mr.Rutherford ubi ſupra.p.204.

1 Becauſe wee hold, that by Calling or Ordination, a Miniſter is made a Paſtor; by Election only he is reſtrained to be ordinarily the Paſtor of his Flock.

2 A Paſtor is a Paſtor of the Catholick Church, though he be not a Catholick Paſtor of the Catholick Church, as were the Apoſtles.

§ 4. Nei-

§ 4. Neither muſt this be taken, as if we would clack you (as reverend *Bains* phraſeth it) altogether under our wings, or ſought further property, then we have from the Lord; but it is your good that doth enforce us to ſpeak it; for till you know your Paſtors ſet over you, the Wolfe doth threaten you. And look, that as it is in Marriage: it is not the having of a husband, which maketh a wife free from all underminers of chaſtity, but the loving her husband: So in this Marriage of Paſtor and People; it is not the having of a Preacher, which doth ſecure you from ſin, ſatan, or ſeducement; but the acknowledging of him, and depending on him in the Lord. So much did the Heathen by the light of Nature reverence their Muſties of old, the Slaves of their Idol Gods, that ſometimes they called their Prieſts by the name of Gods, as *Strabo* reporteth. And among Chriſtians, I never read nor heard of an happy

*Strabo Geogr. l.*10 *p.*471 *d.*

py Church without a good Guide, and a dependance on him, and obedience to him. It is a farre leſſe ſin to be unlearned then unteachable, ſaith *Auguſtine*. O be taught then, not to depart from your determined place of worſhipping the Lord; for in it, God hath the higheſt honour, and returnes unto you the higheſt bleſſings, by the diſpenſation of the grace of God, which is given your Paſtor to you-ward. Be not wilful: for the more wilful, eſpecially upon deliberation, the more wicked.

Auguſt. contra Academ lib. 3. c. 7.

Epheſ. 3. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Separation from determined Church-Communion, is reproved, 1 Cor. 1. 12. and 3. 4.

§ 1. FOurthly, This practice is evidently reproved, 1 *Cor.* 1. 12. For in the church of *Corinth*, which *Paul* had planted, *Apollos* had watered, and which God had bleſſed, and given encreaſe unto; yet even here is church-ſeparation. One ſtandeth for *Paul*, another for *Apollos*, another for *Cephas*. Weeds, they will ſpring up, though *Paul* never planted them, nor *Apollos* watered them, to be ſure God never bleſſed them; and yet they will find an encreaſe. And 1 *Cor.* 3. 4. the Apoſtle tacitely inſinuates an Argument à *Minori ad Majus*: If it were

Culverw. of Schiſme.

were a groſſe and carnal thing to ſide with *Paul*, or to glory in *Apollos*, then much more to ſide with ſuch as are of ordinary or inferiour alloy. You may ſee how he maketh it his πάθημον, to beat down this over-high thought which they had of ſuch as indeed deſerved eſteem and double honour. For to ſay, *I am of Paul, I am of Apollos*, they are the words of ſuch as gloried in the ſeveral gifts and diverſity of excellencies which they had in preaching the Goſpel: and thus it was, one liketh the powerful plainneſſe of *Paul*, another the ample plenty and variety of *Apollos*, a third the ſolidity and perſpicuity of *Cephas*.

§ 2. You ſee then the Corinthians vanity, and in it our propenſity to glory in men for their gifts, and that becauſe we are carnal, which is the Apoſtles cenſure, pointed with a ſtinging Interrogation, *Are ye not carnal?* In ſo much that the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 13. giveth three Reaſons why ſuch church-ſeparation ſhould be ſhunned.

1 Becauſe Chriſt ſeemeth by that

Eng. Ann. in loc.

that means to be divided and torn in pieces, who cannot be the head of two diverſe and diſagreeing bodies, himſelf being but one. *Is Chriſt divided?*

2 Becauſe they cannot without injury to God, ſo depend on men, as on Chriſt; which thing, no doubt they do, who allow whatſoever ſome man ſpeaketh, even for his perſon ſake; approving one ſelfeſame Goſpel, being uttered by one man, and diſliking it being utrered by another man; *Was Paul crucified for you?*

3 Becauſe it is the form and end of Baptiſm to make a promiſe to Chriſt alone, calling on alſo the Name of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt; therefore if a man depend on ſome certain Teachers, and deſpiſe others, he forſaketh Chriſt: for if he held Chriſt his only Maſter, he would hear him teaching by whomſoever: *Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*

§ 3 Overmuch dotage then upon any conceived excellency of Holineſſe, Learning, Eloquence, or the like, without a ſpecial eye to Gods commandment, hath ever been

been the occaſion of greateſt Errors in the world. Satan under this mask uſeth to blear our eyes, and with this bait to inveigle our hearts, that hee might ſecurely bring us to his lure. It was the mask of the Serpents Wiſdome and Sagacity above the reſt of the beaſts of the field, whereby he brought to paſſe our firſt parents ruine. The admirable wiſdome of the long lived Fathers of the elder world, having been for ſo many Ages as Oracles to their Off-ſpring, growne even to a People and Nation while they yet lived, was the ground of the ancient Idolatry of Mankind, whilſt they ſuppoſed that thoſe, to whom for wiſedome they had recourſe, being living, could not but help them being dead. This we may learn out of *Heſiod*: The men (ſaith he) of the golden age, being once dead, became,

Mr. Mede on Gen. 3. 13

Gen. 3. 1.

Heſiod. Oper & Dier, l. 1 ver. 123.

—— —— φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.
Οἵ ῥα φυλάσσουσι τὸ δίκας καὶ χίτλια ἔργα.

They became Godlings and Patrons of mortal men, as if they knew their good and evil works. So the opinion of the bleſſed Martyrs ſuperlative glory in heaven, was made the occaſion of the new found Idolatry of Chriſtians, wherewith they are for the greater part yet overwhelmed. And the eſteeme which *Peter* had above the reſt of the Apoſtles in regard of Chiefdome, even in the Apoſtles times, was abuſed by the old Deceiver to inſtall the Man of ſin. This made Saint *Paul* to ſay, *The Myſtery of iniquity was even then working*: and therefore laboured, as far as he could to prevent it, by as much depreſſing *Peter*, as others exalted him. Nay, he puts us all in mind of the ſtory of the Serpents beguiling *Eve*, that her miſ-hap might be a warning to all, 2 *Corinth* 11.2,3.

2 *Theſ.* 2.7. *Gal.* 2.11. &c.

And to conclude, Have not Papiſts, when they would get Diſciples, learned this of the Divel, to poſſeſſe them firſt with an opinion of ſuperlative

Learning

Learning, Holineſſe, and other Gifts, in their Doctors, ſurpaſsing any of ours? I will ſay no more of this, but that we ought ſo to prize and admire the Gifts and Abilities, which God hath beſtowed upon men, that the Pole-Star of his ſacred Word may ever be in our eye.

CHAP. VIII.

The Lord commandeth to worſhip him orderly: which is not obſerved in indetermined Church-communion.

§ 1. Fifthly, Order is a thing ſo highly pleaſing the Lord, as the three Perſons in the bleſſed Trinity have put themſelves in Order, to ſhew how well they love it: And order is a

thing ſo neerly concerning us, as
Mat.28.19. break Order once, and break
1 John 5.7. both your Staves (ſaith God in
Zech.10.7 *Zachary*) both that of Beauty, and that of Bands. The Staffe of Beauty; for no εὐχημοσύνη, no manner of decency or comelineſs without it, but all out of faſhion. The ſtaffe of Bands; for no στρέωμα, no kind of Steadineſſe or conſtancy, but all looſe without it: All falls back to the firſt *Tohu* and *Bohu*; for all is *Tohu* (empty and void) if God fill not in Order; all is *Bohu*, a diſordered rude chaos of confuſion, if Chriſt order it not. Every body falls to be doing with every thing, and ſo nothing done; nothing well done, I am ſure. Every man then ſhould, whatever his Gifts be, order his Place and Standing in Divine Worſhip by Chriſt aſſigned him. This is judged needful even in ſecular matters. Write one never ſo fair an hand, if hee have not Orderly the Calling of a publick Notary, his Writing is not authentical: Be one never ſo good a Lawyer, if he be not ordered to be a Judge, he can give no definitive

Gen.1.2. תהו בהו

definitive Sentence. The Order of Nature is prefixed by God, and is neceſſarily to be obſerved by every Natural cauſe, ſaith one School-man: And whereſoever there is a beginning, there muſt be ſome Order, ſaith another. *Scot. l. 2. Sent. d. 2. q. 12. n. 3. Aquin. 22. 26. 1. 0.*

§ 2. Ignorance of the Truth, as *Lactantius* noteth well, maketh *incertam labentemque ſententiam*, an uncertain and ſlippery aſſertion. Will-Worſhip is no Religious Act, becauſe it is not directed by Divine Order. Neither are good Intentions enough. We muſt be certain of Gods revealed will to order us in his Worſhip, otherwiſe we cannot do it in faith. Now this is Will-Worſhip, to make any thing anſwer for Gods Worſhip, to our ſelves, of our ſelves, without Order from God, and warrant of his Word. We muſt be Paſsive, not Active here. Mans Deviſe and Self-wiſdome at the beſt, pretend what he will, is no warrant for Gods Worſhip; eſpecially Amphibolies, Equivocations, Mental Reſervations, or the like: for howſoever they may ſilence the cry of *John 4. 23* *Amos 5. 26. Coloſ. 2. 22. 2 Sam. 16. 16*

a carnal conſcience, yet they are but ſhifts and ſhuffles, which have no ground from Gods Word.

Hoſ. 8.14. Though *Iſrael* had builded Temples in *Dan* and *Bethel*, to the memory of God, yet the Lord calls it, a forgetting of him their Maker. God will be worſhipped onely by the rule of his Word. Notwithſtanding the dignity of *Adams* excellent condition in Innocency, the variety and plenty of proviſion he had without any coſt or paines of his own, he was not to live an idle life, and without order. And though he were to work on the Week dayes without ſweat or wearineſſe, yet on the Sabbath (by Gods example, if not by his command) he was to reſt from that work, to give himſelf more intentively to the Worſhip of God, and communion with God; which he could not ſo well do, if he did any thing elſe at the ſame time. It is not then as *Anaxigoras* ſaid, (and our Atheiſts and Epicures do) Man was born to ſee the Sun, and look unto the Heavens; but to ſeek, know, and ſerve the Lord his Maſter. He not only giveth life,

*Lactan. l.*3 *c.*9

but

but means alſo, by which we may orderly, diſtinctly, obſerving due circumſtances, come to know him. *Act.* 17.27.

§. 3. A thing then may bee good in the ſubſtance, and yet in the Circumſtances (Time, Place, Perſon, &c.) unwarrantable. As the Iſraelites worſhipping in the High Places: the Duty was good, but the place where it was performed, was prohibited: ſo the Duty of Will-worſhip in the Indeterminate Service of God, in a Church enjoying her freedome, the Schoolman telleth us, That the Circumſtance aggravateth the Sin. In matters that concerne God, who is ſo fit to be conſulted with, as he whom God ſetteth over us, and ordaineth for the ſelf-ſame purpoſe? In the order of the Univerſe, not only is the Kind or Species intended, but alſo the individuals in the principal parts thereof, ſaith *Scotus*. And all things created by God, have an order to God, and mutually to themſelves, ſaith *Aquinas*: His reaſon is, Becauſe all Order dependeth on the Will of God. Hence I infer, That oftentimes the 2 *Kin.* 12.3 *Deut.* 12.11 *Aquin.* 12. 73.7.0. *Scot. in Sent l.* 2. *d.* 3. *q.* 7. *ad* 5. *Aquin.* 1. 47.3.0. & 1 106.3.2.

circumſtance of an Action marrs the ſubſtance; and that in divine matters, we muſt not only look that the body of our ſervice be ſound, but that the cloathes be fit. The Princes of the Philiſtines had before given their voices what ſhould be done with the Ark of God, yet nothing is done without the direction and aſſent of thoſe whom they accounted Sacred. Nature it ſelf ſendeth us in divine things to thoſe perſons whoſe Calling is divine. It is either diſtruſt, or preſumption, or contempt that carries us our own wayes in ſpiritual matters, without adviſing with them, whoſe lips God hath appointed to preſerve knowledge. The Philiſtines deſired to be directed by their Prieſts and Diviners in the matter of their Oblation; *What ſhall be the Treſpaſſe Offering* (ſay they) *which we ſhall return unto God?* They knew well that it were bootleſſe for them to offer what they liſted. Pagans can teach us, how unſafe it is to walk in the wayes of Religion without a determined and certaine Guide. This is likewiſe confirmed by the

1 *Sam.*5.10

1 *Sam.*6.4

cuſtom

cuſtom and Canons of the ancient Church: For it was decreed in the Councel at *Eliberin*, about the year 310. *That if any man (without a lawful cauſe) ſtayed three Lords Days from his Pariſh Church, his puniſhment was, that he ſhould be ſo long time excluded from Chriſtian Aſſemblies.* Moreover *Coriolanus* citeth out of *Burchard* another Canon of the ſame Councel, in which it was determined, *That they who came ſeldom to their Pariſh Church, ſhould not at their approach to death, be admitted into Communion, before they brought forth fruits meet for repentance.*

Conc. Eliber. cap. 21.

§ 4 In vain is comfort expected from God, if we conſult not with his particular Vice-gerent, that hath overſight over us: For *David* in his diſtreſſe for *Ziklag*, ſpoiled by the *Amalekites*, called for *Abiather*; he could not live in the Court of *Achiſh* a Heathen King, without his Seer and overſeer. Hence *Gad* is called *Davids Seer*, 2 *Sam.* 24. 11. *Heman the Kings Seer*, 1 *Chron.* 25. 5. *Feduthun the Kings Seer*, 2 *Chron.* 35. 15. becauſe they put their Kings princi-

Bp Hall, Contemp. 81

1 *Sam.* 30. 7

Ravanel. in Videre.

pally and particularly in mind of those things which appertained to the service and worship of the Lord. And if *David* a Prophet, a man after Gods own heart, had need of a particular Seer; should not meane and ordinary Christians much more attend to the directions and instructions of their particular Guides, allotted to them, and allowed by the Lord, who is the God of Order, and not the Authour of Confusion; and hath commanded all things to be done decently and in order?

See English Annotat. in 1 Cor. 14. 40.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

We are bound to hearing in our particular Congregations by Christs Doctrine and Example.

§ 1. SIxthly, Gods covenant indeed is general with all his Creatures; more particular with Man, yet more with his Church, moſt ſpecial with his Elect; and in his Church with his Miniſters, *Mal.* 2.5 Now this Covenant with Gods Miniſters and Meſſengers is everlaſting, in all ages and generations. Yet Gods Covenant abrogates not his owne Right, Power and Soveraignty; nor abates the rule and Authority of his Law, nor their deviations and corruptions; nay, his Curſe upon ſinful Prieſts and Paſtors doth not annihilate or evacuate that Covenant. *Gen.* 9.9.18 *Jer.* 33.20

venant. In regard of this Covenant it is, that our Saviour intimates that all Teachers ſit in *Moſes* Seat, as Expounders of Gods Will, no leſſe then the Scribes and Phariſees. For Καθέδρα importeth the Office of a Teaching the Word of God, Law and Goſpel; becauſe while men taught, they were wont to ſit. *Suidas* therefore interpreteth καθέδρα by ἵδρυσις, a ſitting or tarrying; becauſe God appointed Teachers of the Law, therefore Chriſt would have them to be heard, though their Perſons were wicked. All whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do. While Paſtors have a Calling to preach and deliver the Truth, they muſt be heard, though not imitated, where they practiſe not. Thus our Saviour ſpeaketh (ſaith *Chryſoſtome*) *All whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do*, leſt he ſhould leave the Hearers any occaſion of Diſobedience, to their greater condemnation, or contempt of their Miniſtry whom he ſhould ſend after. In the Miniſtry the Ordinance of God is to be conſidered; *ſive Paulus, ſive Fu-*

*Mat.*23.2.

Engl. Ann. in locum.

*Mal.*2.7

Chryſ. Hom. 73.

Judas baptizet, Chriſtus peccatum lavat, abſolvit, & delet. Whether *Paul* or *Judas* baptize, Chriſt waſheth away, forgiveth, and putteth away ſin. *De Bapt. Chr. Cypr.* *De Bapt. Chriſti. Inter opera Cypr.*

§. 2 Our Saviour when he had cleanſed the ten Lepers, commanded them to ſhew themſelves to the Prieſts, *Luke* 17.14. which ſhould teach us Humility and ſubjection toward our Paſtors, *Sacerdotem adhuc appellabat, quem ſciebat eſſe ſacrilegum:* For Chriſt yet called him Prieſt, whom he knew to be ſacrilegious, ſaith *Cyprian.* Our Saviour likewiſe, who could as eaſily have taught *Paul* immediately what he would have him to do, would yet ſend him to *Ananias* (*Ananias* as ignorant of Gods will herein, as *Saul* at preſent, and ſtarting at, and declining the office enjoyned him) to confirm the particular authority of the Miniſtry of particular men ſet over us in the Lord; and to teach all Hearers to attend unto it, as the very Ordinance and power of God unto ſalvation. Chriſt could likewiſe, *eâdem operâ*, have inſtructed the Centurion by the Angel

Cypr. l. 3. Ep. 9.

Act. 9.10. &c

Rom. 1. 16.

Act.10.3. &c. Angels but he cauſed him to ſend (*nominatim*) for *Peter* to *Joppa*, to come and enform him for the ſame end, and left him not to the inſtruction τῷ τύχοντος, of one at random.

§ 3. But here once for all, leſt we ſhould be miſunderſtood: We *Bellarm. de Cleric. l.2. c.8.* abhor the Doctrine of *Bellarmine*, who teacheth, *Cum Paſtor ordinarius & aliquis alius qui prædicat non Vocatus, contraria docent, debet omnino populus Paſtorem ſuum potius ſequi, quam illum alterum qui non eſt Paſtor; etiamſi fortè contingeret, ut Paſtor erraret*: When an ordinary Paſtor and another who is not called to be a Paſtor, do teach things contrary, the people ought rather to follow their owne Paſtor then the other who is no Paſtor, though it fall out that the Paſtor do erre.

In like manner we deteſt the *Toiet. de Inſtruct. Sacerd. l.4.c.3 Sect.6* Doctrine of *Tolet* the Jeſuite, who ſaith, *Si Ruſticus citra articulos credat ſuo Epiſcopo proponenti aliquod Dogma Hæreticum, meretur credendo, licet ſit error*: If a Countrey man, beſide Chriſtian Articles, do believe his Biſhop broaching an Hereſie

Heresie, he meriteth by believing, though it be an Error.

Furthermore, it is a fearful Doctrine which *Bellarmine* teacheth, *Si autem Papa erraret præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, & virtutes malas:* If the Pope should erre by commanding Vices, and forbidding Vertues, the Church were bound to believe, that Vices were good, and Vertues evil. *Bellarm. de Rom. Pont. l.4.c.5*

And we condemn the intolerable presumption of the Councel of *Trent*, that sealeth up their Canons with so many *Anathema's* to them who dissent from their Errors. Yet not onely did their Schoolman, *William of Occam*, teach the contrary in effect to all these, *Si Papa & maximè celebres Episcopi incidant in Hæresin, ad Catholicos divoluta est potestas omnis judicandi*; if the Pope and the principal Bishops of the Christian world do fall into Heresie, the power of all Ecclesiastical judgment is divolved to the remaining Catholick Clergy: but also *Cyprian*, *Cecilius*, *Polycarpus*, and others, writing *Occam part 1.l.5. c.28.* *Cypr.Ep.68*

to

to the Clergy in *Spain*, perſwade them to ſeparate themſelves from thoſe Biſhops who fell in time of perſecution, and denyed the Faith.

§ 4. Now, it is much to be admired, that it ſhould be confeſſed in *Theſi*, but denyed by the world in *Hypotheſi*, that whoſoever oppoſeth, deſpiſeth, or perſecuteth the ſervants of Chriſt, they riſe up to oppoſe Chriſt himſelfe. What hath the particular oppoſed Paſtor done contrary to the general confeſſed Theſis or Divine Poſition? What hath he aſſumed what the Lord hath not put upon him? If ye take offence at the diſcharge of his Office, it is Gods doing, who fearfully and frequently threatneth his neglect. But men think they are not ſo ſilly and unreaſonable as their Miniſter would make them. God doth not reveal his Truth (ſay they) onely or chiefly to the Learned: They have the teaching of the Spirit as well as their Paſtors. But alas, that men ſhould..

Luke 10.16
Acts 9.4
1 *Theſ.* 4.8

ſhould bee ſo ignorant againſt both Scripture and Experience! Indeed God changeth the Will on a ſudden, but he doth not infuſe knowledge, eſpecially of difficult points, on a ſudden. If hee do, why are we commanded to ſearch and ſtudy the Scriptures, and meditate on them day and night? Did they ever know any that was ſuddenly made ſo wiſe, except it were only in his own conceit? O curſed pride, that will not ſuffer one godly man of many, to know that hee is ſo ignorant; and that knowledge cannot bee had ſo eaſily! But I expect not that the more ſilly ignorant Profeſſors ſhould apprehend this or any other Truth, though it bee delivered never ſo plainely or evidently. It is *Auguſtines* ruled caſe, *Nullus hominum ita locutus eſt, ut in omnibus ab omnibus intelligeretur*: No man ſpake ſo plaine, that in all things hee was underſtood by all men. Pride ever thinks it cannot err, and that rather all the world is dark,

John 5.39.
Act. 17.2. 11
Pſalm 1.2.

Auguſt. de Trin. l.6.c.1

dark, then it ſelfe blind. The proud Phariſees would not admit that Chriſt ſhould preach any thing worthy of admiration; therefore they concluded, that their Officers were deceived. Pride makes men ſo blind and ſtupid, that they cannot be ſenſible of any the moſt excellent graces in thoſe they hate. It was the Phariſees proud opinion of themſelves, that cauſed them to deſpiſe others, diſſenting from their Impiety and unbeliefe. *Rideat me iſte dicentem, qui ille non ſentit, & ego doleam ridentem me.*

John 7. 47. 1 *Joh.* 3 12

Aug. Conf. lib. 10. *c.* 12

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

We are bound to the Duty of determined Church-communion by the auſtome of Apoſtolick and Pimitive times.

§. 1. SEventhly; And yet we have for the ſame Point, the churches cuſtomes clear enough, which hath ever been counted to have ſolid Authority. Every Society, beſides their Lawes in Books, have their cuſtomes alſo in practice; and theſe not to be taken up or laid downe at every mans pleaſure. We may not reject that cuſtome which we cannot condemn, ſaith *Tertullian*. The civil Law ſaith, *Imo magnæ authoritatis hoc jus habetur; quod in tantum probatum eſt, ut non fuerit ſcripto comprehendere neceſſe*. Cuſtomes are

Tertul. de Vel. Virgin. c. 2

Pandect. 1. Tit. 3. de Lege 35.

are of ſo great authority, that men remember them without book, and writ them not as they do their Lawes or Statutes. Now as every Society, ſo the Church, beſides her Lawes, hath her cuſtoms too. I add, that the Apoſtles and their chuches had their cuſtomes. For about thirty years after Chriſts Aſcenſion, the Apoſtle pleadeth cuſtome; *We* (that is, the Apo-
1 Cor. 11. 16 ſtles) *have no ſuch cuſtome, neither the Churches of God.* If ſo few years were enough to make a cuſtome, ſhall it not much more be a cuſtom after above Sixteen hundred and fifty years? A cuſtom is ſuſceptible of more and leſſe; the longer it runneth, the more ſtrength it gathereth. *Conſuetudo etiam in*
Tertull. de Cor. Milit. c. 4. *civilibus rebus pro Lege ſuſcipitur, cum deficit Lex*; it is *Tertullians* Rule: Cuſtome is received for a Law, even in civil buſineſſes, where there is no Law. Moreover, as the church hath cuſtomes, ſo ſtands upon them, and fears not to repeat them. *Moſes*, as a Law-giver, one would think, would be all for Law, yet he is *poſitivè* ful for cuſtom too.
Deut. 4. 32. *Aſk now of the dayes that are paſt*

which

which were before thee, ſince the day that God created man upon the earth; and ask from the one ſide of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any ſuch thing. Job is for it too; *Enquire of the former age, and prepare thy ſelf to the ſearch of their fathers (for we are but of yeſterday) ſhall not they teach thee?* The Prophets do the ſame; for *Jeremy* ſaith, *Stand ye in the wayes, and ſee, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.* To all theſe agreeable is that of the Fathers, took up in the firſt Nicene Councel, and which ever ſince hath been the churches cry, Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἤθη κρατείτω, *Let old cuſtomes prevail.* Thus you ſee cuſtome hath been counted a ſound allegation, from the beginning of the world.

Job 8. 8, &c.

Jer. 6. 16.

§ 2 Now, that determined church-communion was the cuſtom of the Primitive chriſtians, appeareth,

First, The ſervants of God were all with one accord in *Solomons* porch, *Act.* 5. 12. There was their appointed place or ordinary meeting, there to preach to the people.

Diodat. in loc.

People. None among them presumed to go to any other place to hear any other Teachers: None among them presumed to forsake their own publick Assembly; or in neglect thereof, to frequent other Congregations; much lesse any private Conventicle. Yea, the place of their meeting shewed their constant resolution, to testifie the truth of Jesus, from which no fear or danger could then deterr them. The Rulers of the Synagogue, *Act.* 13.15, sent to desire *Paul* and his company to speak a word of exhortation, before the Apostle opened his mouth. For as no man might presume in those dayes to preach without lawful Authority, and calling thereto by the Governours by God appointed; it being the Doctrine and practice of the Gnosticks (the most hateful of all Heretricks) that the Ministeral function might be exercised by any man: So neither were Congregations then without some Government; for in every Synagogue it appeareth there were some Rulers, who restrained extravegant gadders, that did so gad to and fro, that like backsliding

Engl. Ann. in locum

Iren. l. 4. c. 5

Eng. Ann. on Zech. 2. 39

ding *Iſrael*, they oft took a new way in Gods ſervice. Anarchical licentiouſneſs is a late ſprung up Muſhroom.

§ 3 Next, hear how *Clemens Romanus*, the ancienteſt (and therefore a faithful Witneſſe) of all thoſe whom we call Fathers, confirmeth this cuſtom. The main ſcope of his Epiſtle is to exhort the Corinthians, a Factious people, to ſubmit themſelves to their own Paſtors, τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑμῶν. His Argument whereby he perſwadeth them to this Duty, is, beſide other, Τοῦτους δικαίως νομίζομεν ἀποβαλλέσθαι τῆς λειτουργίας: Lawful and laborious (for of ſuch he ſpeaketh) Miniſters cannot be rejected, but wrongfully and injuriouſly. Thereafter he asketh this Queſtion, What kind of men are they that forſake or deſpiſe their Overſeers and Miniſters? He anſwereth, Οἱ συμπλοκὴν πάσης κακίας πλήρεις; only the abominable, and full of all wickedneſſe. Then he addeth, Τὸ σχίσμα ὑμῶν πολλοὺς διέστρεψεν; Your ſeparation from him perverted many.

Clem. Rom. Ep. ad Corinth. p. 2. & 73.

Pag. 57.

Pag. 59

Pag. 61

ny. Whereas on the contrary he telleth his Corinthians; That the height (of grace and glory) unto which love (towards their own overſeers) advanceth, ἀνεκδιήγητον ἐστι, it is unexpreſſible. Now all this, and much more, he alledgeth to confirme his former propoſition, Ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑμῶν. Submit your ſelves obediently unto your owne Miniſters.

P.g. 64

Pag. 2 ct 73

Hath then this ill cuſtome of forſaking our Miniſters, in the diſcharge of their function, laſted long? I ſay as our Engliſh *Seneca*, it is more then time it were abrogated; age is an aggravation to ſin. Hereſie or abuſe, if it be gray-headed, deſerves ſharper oppoſition. To ſay, I will do ill, becauſe I have done ſo, is perilous and impious preſumption. Continuance can no more make any wickedneſſe ſafe, then the Author of ſin, no Divel.

Bp Hall Vowes cent. 2. Sect. 98.

§. 4. Laſtly, *Sozomen* writeth, that it was a cuſtome in *Alexandria*, that though one Paſtor had the overſight of the reſt, yet every parti-

Sozom. Hiſt l. 1. c. 14. in fin.

particular Paſtor did govern their particular churches, and gathered their people unto their ſeveral Congregations. *Euſebius* reporteth, that *Conſtantine* the Great, publiſhed a Law, that no Separatiſts, and hereticks ſhould aſſemble themſelves or meet together either publickly or privately in any place, but in their Parochial churches, and with their appointed and ordinary Paſtor: and that Hiſtorian ſaith, that by that Law the very memory of moſt of thoſe Sectaries was forgotten and extinguiſhed. This noble Act of *Conſtantine* is in effect mentioned alſo by *Sozomen*. The ſame *Sozomen* reporteth, that *Theodoſius* the Great decreed (having firſt torn the Petitions of Sectaries) that they ſhould not aſſemble together, but in the Orthodoxe congregations; much leſs that they ſhould profeſſe their Heterodoxe Doctrine, or Ordaine Paſtors: but ſhould be baniſhed from their habitations, diſgraced by ſome Infamy, and not be partakers of common priviledges and Favours with others. In that Panegyrical Speech, mentioned by *Euſebius*, this cuſtome

Euſ. de vit. Cõ. l. 3. c. 63
Soz. lib. 2. c. 30.
Soz. lib. 7. cap. 12.
Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 10. cap. 4. circ. med.

ſtome is not only confirmed, but hyperbolically demonſtrated, to be immediatly ſubordinate to the power of the High Prieſt of our profeſſion Chriſt Jeſus; ſo that I need not any more to commemorate the power that a faithful ordinary Paſtor hath over his charge and people. This I have ſo briefly intimated, not only becauſe they that are in Authority may, and muſt occaſionally mention their Authority; for ſo did the Apoſtles: but alſo that the Revilers of the Miniſters of Chriſt, with whom this vicious age aboundeth, may know what power Miniſters had, both in the Apoſtles time, and for many hundred years after (as they may read in holy *Cyprian* and others) even when Miniſterial cenſures were farre more rigid then now they are, and when no Magiſtrate did ſecond them; yea when it was an hazard to their lives to be known chriſtians: And yet now, when chriſtianity is in credit, even thoſe that ſeeme Religious, do judge Chriſts diſcipline to be Tyranny and proud domination.

1 *Cor.* 9. 1

Mr Baxters Reſt, part 2. *c.* 6.

§ 5. Cuſtome then may be alledged

ledged againſt them that contend againſt Parochial church-communion. No reaſoning with the contentious; it will be to ſmall purpoſe. None ſo ready a way to ſtop their mouths, as cuſtome. The Apoſtle uſing it againſt the contentious [*If any man ſeem to be contentious*] teacheth us to uſe it againſt the like: Specially, if the Matter be by nature (as this is) of circumſtance and outward Order; for a wrangling wit will elude all uſe of Reaſon. It is well obſerved of the Philoſopher, that in Moral Matters, men may not look for Mathematical proofs; the nature of the Subject will not beare them. If not in moral, much leſs in Ritual; they of all other, are leaſt ſuſceptible of a demonſtrative Reaſon. The Apoſtle ſaw this, and therefore reſolves all into the churches practiſe, by cuſtome confirmed in this kind: enough of it ſelfe, to ſhew that the Churches cuſtome ſhall ever be of force, to overrule ſuch as are contentious. Yet we do not compare cuſtomes, much leſſe, oppoſe them to Scripture. We ſay as *Cyprian*, We muſt not

1 *Cor.* 11. 16

Ariſt. phyſ. l. 2. *c.* 2 & *aliis ſæpe.*

Cypr. Ep. 63

follow the cuſtome of man, but the Verity of God. Yea, *Wo to him that followeth a multitude to do Evil.* For the cuſtomes of the people are vaine. Never any cuſtome againſt Scripture. Nay, *Conſuetudo ſine Veritate, vetuſtas Erroris eſt*, ſaith *Cyprian* againe: Cuſtom without Verity, is the oldneſſe of Errour. By this then we may ſee, we have a ground for what we do in Parochial Church-communion. We do no more then the churches of God. So our ears may here the voice in *Eſay*, behind us, *This is the way, walk in it*; As you do, you are in the right, and there hold you.

Exod. 23.2 *Jer.*10.3. *Cyp.Ep.*74. *Iſa.* 30.21.

§ 6. But we do commonly much miſtake in one evil cuſtome, concerning the different Gifts and Qualifications of our Miniſters. Now, if unto every one of us Grace be given according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt: if all diverſity of grace proceed from the meaſure of Chriſts gift, none ought to repine at anothers gifts, nor be proud of his own. For that were to imagine, as *Pelagians* affirmed, that grace is given according to Merit

*Eph.*4.7. *Concil. Diosp. Can.*6. *q.*12.

Merit of condignity or congruity.
But heare what *Nazianzene* ſaith
concerning this: Enquire not what *Naz. Orat.*
the Authority is, or Dignity of *40.p.556.*
thy Teacher; Any one is ſufficient
to inſtruct thee, who is approved,
who is not openly condemned, nor
rejected from the church. Thou
who haſt need to be healed, judge
not thy Judges, nor vilifie the dig-
nity of them, by whom thou art
cleanſed; neither make a difference
between them that beget thee in
Chriſt. One indeed is better then
another, and one is inferior to a-
nother; but conſider: If two Sea-
ling Rings, the one of Gold, the
other of Iron, each of them having
engraven the Emperours Image,
do imprint the Wax; what doth
the one Seale differ from the other?
No thing at all: Diſcerne then
the matter in the Wax, how witty
ſoever thou art. Thus holy *Na-*
zianzen. Miniſters indeed have
their particular Gifts given them:
To one thus, to another thus.
One meaſure fitteth not every Mi-
niſter; but of theſe ſome are more *1 Cor.12.4*
Excellent, ſome leſſe. *Paul* and *Bar-*
nabas were not alike gifted. As *Act. 14.12*

there are Mettals, ſome of Gold, ſome of Silver; ſo gifts in Miniſters. I conclude this in the words of Mr *Bayne*: Now, to make no difference, but to embark all in one bottome, hath more good affection, then ſound judgement. Though there be diverſities of Gifts in Miniſters, ſome more, ſome leſſe excellent, yet we muſt neither immoderately admire the one, nor underprize the other. There are people affected both wayes; ſome that think it enough to give their names to ſuch a man, and to cry down others in comparison of him who hath the moſt parts; theſe perſons have no true taſt of the gifts of him whom they extol; for the wondering at their perſon, keep th from taſting the Gifts: As if a cup of wine were ſet down, while we look at the curious workmanſhip of the cup; ſo they. Others think ſo baſely of them, as if they could ſay nothing worth the hearing. Some on the other hand, becauſe *God* doth all in all, they make no diſtinction in the Inſtrument; but are offended with them, that look more at one then another. Now be-

Mr Bain on Eph.3.7.

tween

tween theſe, there is the true way; neither ſo to love thoſe who have the greateſt, as to deſpiſe the other; nor to love the leſſer, ſo as not to love there more, where God loveth more; and to bleſſe him more (though we do it in all) where he hath diſtributed more Grace and favour.

CHAP. XI.

Reaſon teacheth that Indetermined Church-Communion is a Carnal Glorying in the Worthineſſe or Excellency of other Paſtors, above their own.

§ 1. EIghthly and laſtly, I will add ſome Reaſons: For Faith is a rational Act of a rational creature. And that is the ſtrongeſt Faith, which hath the ſtrongeſt Reaſons to prove the Teſtimony to be valid upon which it reſteth, and the cleareſt appre-

M. Baxters Reſt, part 2 p. 207.

henſion and uſe of thoſe Reaſons. Yea, that is the trueſt Faith which hath the trueſt Reaſons truly apprehend, and uſed. Reaſon rectified is the Eye of the Soul, and the Guide of our Life. The uſe of the Word, and all Ordinances and Providences, is firſt to rectifie Reaſon, and thereby the Will, and thereby the Life. I ſay againe, Faith it ſelf is an Act of Reaſon: or elſe it is a brutiſh Act, and not humane. He that hath the righteſt Reaſon, hath the moſt Grace. Sincerity (and conſequently our Salvation) lyeth in the ſtrength and prevalency of rectified Reaſon over the Fleſh, and its intereſt and deſires. I do then reſolve my Parenetical confutation into this Rational concluſion: It is a groſs and carnal thing to glory in the worthineſs and excellency of them that diſpence the Myſteries of Salvation. Now, that ſeparation from Parochial Church-communion is guilty of this groſſe errour, apppeareth by theſe Reaſons.

§ 2. First, It ſeeks to eclipſe and obſcure the glory of God. God hath appointed all Meanes and

and creatures to illuſtrate and brighten his Glory. He that dares ſet it upon the creatures head muſt needs be guilty of *leſe* Majeſty, in an high degree. This is all the honour left to us, *Obſequii Gloria*, the honour to obey, to be wholly ſubject to ſo great and good a God, and to give all glory to him. Now he that made us, and knowes our mold, and faſhioned the weakneſſe and frailty of our Nature, choſe to himſelf ſo weak an Inſtrument, that by the few words of a fraile and ignorant man a precious and immortal Soul ſhould be eternally ſaved; which moſt Divines make a greater work, then that of creation: that ſo we might be neceſſitated to look higher, to the powerful hand of God, that brings ſo great things to paſs. Thus hath he choſen, not only *fooliſh things*, and *weak* things, but *things that are not*, to bring to naught things that are. A ſtrange Paradox: and enough to amaze an *Ariſtotle*, to heare of a *Non Ens* annihilating an *Ens*. Yet, the things which are not at all in mens apprehenſion, do give the light of

Iſa. 42.8. *Jer.* 9.23.

1 *Cor.* 1.27, 28.

2*Cor*.4.6,7 the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Lord could have made his Seraphim, or other Angels, even in this sense Ministring
Hebr.1.24. Spirits, for the good of them that should be Heires of Salvation: but then we should have been took up too much with the glittering brightnesse of the creature. Why then do we gaze on *Paul*, he doth but plant? or glory in *Apollos*, he doth but water? Why do we run to others of inferior parts in other Congregations? What is this but to oppose the Almighty, and to counterplot Wisdome it selfe? Now judge you, whether this be not a gross and carnal Error, or not.

§ 3. Secondly, It detracts from the Word of God: from its Majesty, and from its Efficacy. 1. From its Majesty; in that the Word of God is made to stoop to mans fancy. It is a signe, men never received the love of the Truth, when plaine Truth cannot please them; but it must be set out in such attyre, as may best satisfie their Eye. And unlesse the Word of God, as the Jewes tell us of the Manna,

Manna, though fabulously (that whatsoever character or Idea of tast a man shapt to himselfe in his fancy, when he was eating the Manna, it served to the Appetite of the Eater, and was tempered to every ones liking) have so many several relishes agreeable to every ones liking, even this, though Angels food, shall be loathed. And surely this argues a carnal heart. Though *Paul* and *Apollos* were of admirable endowments, yet the Word of God is embraced by some, when coming from one; and neglected, when published by the other. It was the same Truth, but not in the same dress. *Chrysostome* tels us of two in his time, a Greek, and a Christian, that were very hot in dispute, whether *Paul*, or *Plato*, were the better Scholler. The Christian he amplifies S. *Pauls* Wisdome and Excellency; the Greek scornes him as rude and simple, and his writings, not comparable to *Plato's*, Philosophical and lofty stile. The Father hee comes in as it were, to moderate; and when he had magnified S. *Paul's* learning, he seems to chide the

Wisd. 6. 20, 21.
Ainsw. on Exod.
2 *Cor.* 11. 12.
Chrysost.

the Christian, that he did not yeild the other what he would have. Grant indeed that *Paul* came in a more plaine and unlearned way, κατηγορία τοιαύτη ἐγκώμιον ἐστιν, οὐ βλασφημία τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἀλλὰ δόξα. That aspertion was the praise, not the disgrace, but the honour of the Apostles. What! Must the Royal Law bow to man? Must the Word, which must search the conscience, tickle the Fancy? Are not these men of itching Eares. And judge you, whether these be not carnal. 2. From its Efficacy. The Gospel shines with it own beames, and needs not borrow light from any man; for it is gloriously cloathed with such ornaments as Christ hath put upon it: when God had once writ with his own finger upon the Tables of Stone, they need no humane polishing. But then, the quickening power of the Spirit must goe along with it. Unlesse the *arm of the Lord be revealed*, there is none
Esa. 53. 1. will *beleeve our report*. The A-
1 *Cor.* 2. 4. postle tels us *of a demonstration* of the Spirit. Now a *demonstration* (as the Philosopher hath it) is

φῶς

φῶς ἀληθείας, a native gloſs of Truth; which clearely ſhewes it, and preſently convinceth a man, there is no diſputing againſt a *Demonſtration*. Why then do men attribute ſo much unto man, as if the Word were a dead letter, till quickned by his endowments? As if *Paul* did not only plant, but bleſs; And *Apollos* not only water, but gave the increaſe; and God in the mean while did nothing, but ſtood as a Spectator. When as indeed, *Paul* is but at the beſt, the Lords Eccho, that never ſpeaks till it be ſpoken unto. And are not theſe carnal, that glorying in the Endowments of Teachers, take from the Word of God the Efficacy of it, as well as the Majeſtie of it.

Ariſtot. Analytic. Poſter. l. 1. c. 2.

§ 4. Thirdly, It breeds Schiſmes and Diviſions in the Church. Now,

Firſt, Schiſmes doe hinder the Communion of Saints. For all communion flowes from Union: And Diviſion deſtroyes Union. Some make Unity, the very Forme of being, but ſure it tends to the well being of the Church.

But

But when one ſhall ſay, I am of *Calvin*, and another I am of *Luther*; when as they might both meet in the Name of Chriſtian: Nay, when by moſt ridiculous Diſſention (for we have heard of ſuch a σκιομαχία) when one ſhall ſay, I am of *Martin*; and another, I am of *Luther*; whereas they did but divide *Martin-Luther*, for they were both of his Religion; What muſt this needs bring, but a deformity and confuſion upon the face of the Church, enough to make up a Chaos?

Culverwel of Schiſm.

Secondly, Theſe ſchiſms and diviſions ſtop the progreſſe of the Goſpel. If Chriſtians would do but as the Cretians cuſtome was, (whence *Syncretiſmus*) to joyn their diviſions againſt ſome common enemie, then there would be an happy *Synchriſtianiſmus*: When the hearts, and tongues, and pens of all them that profeſſe the ſame faith in ſincerity, would agree among themſelves, and wholly oppoſe the main adverſary: How quickly would the Goſpel then flouriſh, and every mountain amongſt us become a plain, the ſeven hils amongſt

mongſt the reſt? How ſhould every one, in conſideration of ſo happy a time, have τὴν ψυχὴν ἔνδον χορδὴν, as *Eunapius* ſpeaks, a ſweet chorus or company of well tuned affections? and a Spirit tripudiating for joy, as *Abraham* did ἀγαλλιᾶται, when he foreſaw Chriſts day. But until we forget to ſay, *I am of Paul*, and *I am of Apollos*, we are not like to hear the joyfull acclamation of *Grace, Grace*, in the progreſſe of the Goſpel.

Eunap. in Johan 8. 56

Zech. 4. 7.

Thirdly, Schiſms and diviſions give great advantage to our enemies to ſet up the Kingdom of Satan. It was the ſaying of *Conſtantine* the Great, *Diſſention in the Church a is greater evill then any other.* The Church thus becomes militant againſt her ſelf, and the Enemy becomes triumphant. The Church then for peace hath great bitterneſſe; Whereupon *Bernard* playeth no leſſe elegantly then morally: *Amaritudo mea amara prius in nece Martyrum; amarior poſt in conflictu Hæreticorum; amariſſima nunc in moribus domeſticorum:* The bitterneſſe of the Church firſt was bitter

Soz. l. 1. cap. 18.

Iſa. 38. 17

Bern. in Cantic. Ser. 35.

bitter in the death of Martyrs; next more bitter in her conflict against Hereticks; but moſt bitter then, when her children have a *form of godlineſſe, but deny the power of it in their lives.* Oh that we could learn of Satan, and his agents ſubordinate to him; to have a ſtrict union and confederacy among our ſelves; as that in *Job* is uſually allegorized, *The ſcales of Leviathan are ſhut together as with a cloſe ſeal*; in reſpect of their ſecrecie and combinations.

2. *Tim.* 3. 5. *Luk.* 16. 8. *Job.* 41. 15.

But further, as it gives this general advantage, ſo more ſpecially, it is the original of all Errours, and in-let of all Hereſies: When men by a ſtrange προσωπολη-ψία, or reſpect of perſons, ſhall ſet up ſome one as an Oracle; if ſuch a one broach an Error, oh how greedily do they drink it, as if it were ſome ſaving Truth! The Divel thus ſerves many, as *Agrippina* did *Claudius*; he mingles poiſon in their delicate meat, and they fall to it with an appetite. So long then as men glory in other Teachers, beſides their ordinary Paſtors, are they not carnal? for this glo-

Tacit. Annal. l. 12. *in fine.*

rying

rying breeds Schiſms, which ſtops the progreſſe of the Goſpel, hinders the communion of Saints, and giveth great advantage to the Enemies, and originall to all Errours.

CHAP. XII.

Some ſinful Effects and Conſequents of Parochiall Church-Separation.

§. 1. AS it is moſt agreeable to the dictates of Reaſon, that a people in a vicinity or neighbourhood dwelling together, ought to joyne with thoſe of that neighbourhood, according to their beſt convenience, for participation of divine Ordinances: So Chriſtians by Providence ſeated among thoſe that are in covenant by a viſible *Profeſſion*, and joyning in Ordinances, muſt much rather make it their buſineſs to reform abuſes that are found in their Congre-

gregations, then by any means withdraw from their *Parochiall Churches.* For whosoever doth deny that the Parishes in *England* are true Churches, he doth more then judg a particular brother, and more then he is able to make good, and more then the Brethren of *New-England* would affirm. And this is the *Third* and last part of my Task, to shew that the practice I oppose, is *contrary to Discipline*; which is *Doctrine Index*, the truest discoverer of *Doctrine*; so that the quality of Faith is valued according to the conversation. And, first,

M. Baxters Ans. to Mr. Eyre. p. 35.

Tertull. de Præsc. c. 43

§ 2. That we might shun the fearful Effects and consequences of Church-Separation, we find frequent advice in Scripture, To *consider one another, provoking to love, and to good works:* To *exhort one another daily:* To *comfort our selves together, and edifie one another:* To *warn them that are unruly, to comfort feeble minded, to support the weak:* To *convert Sinners from the error of their wayes.* All these precepts do argue an holy zeal for God, and hatred of Sin in

Heb. 10. 24. & 3. 13.

1 *Thes.* 5. 11

Jam. 5. 20.

in our ſelves, and bowels of compaſſion toward others. We read of Separation from Sin and fleſhly defilements, 2 *Cor.*6.17. *Jam.*1.27. But we read not of any Separation from Church-communion, and fellowſhip in Ordinances given thus in charge, nor of any preſidents going before us in it: But we read of an heavie brand laid upon Separatiſts. *Jude* 19. As it is againſt all dictates of Reaſon, that a people ſcattered at a great diſtance ſhould combine themſelves in a church way for Sacred Ordinances; ſo it is clear againſt the Scriptures. I grant that Cohabitation or dwelling together maketh not up a congregational church; for Infidels and Pagans may cohabit, and may make an Idol-church, but not a Church of God: Yet cohabitation is one Ingredient. Saints cohabitating, that is (in the New Teſtament language) people ſeparated for God, not Jewes nor Infidels, but Chriſtians, and joyning in Ordinances (as in duty they ought) are a Congregational church. We find ſeven ſeveral Epiſtles in the *Revelation*, written *Rev.* 2 et 3 from

from Heaven to ſeven ſeveral churches; all which had their abode at the place, where the church bore its Name: theſe are Scripture churches. Now, if any one church be made up of chriſtians, ſome inhabiting at one of theſe places, ſome at another, ſome at a third place, ſcarce three of one Town, no more then of one mind; here is not Scripture Order, which is of God, but Apocryphal confuſion. As then a Paſtor ought to watch over his people, and his people ought to obey and attend to their Paſtor; ſo this is impoſſible to be done by confuſed running to hear as every one liketh, in a diſtracted church-Separation, contrary to the Ordinances of God and good Magiſtrates. Exceptions indeed may be taken at the overlarge extent and diſordered ſituation of divers Parochial congregations: But Parochial Aſſemblies (not the name but the thing) is the way that comes up to the Rule of Scripture, Light of Reaſon, and the Preſidents of Primitive times. Our congregational Bretheren will have the limit of a Particular church

Act. 20.28.
Heb. 13.17.
Mr. Blake. Cov. Cap. 3.

church, to be within that number of perſons, that may congregate in one place for Ordinances : If this be yeilded, then it will eaſily be proved, that Pariſh-congregations are of Divine Inſtitution; and then it will conſequently be true, that peoples Separation from Parochial Church-communion hath this Sinful Effect, to be a Diſorderly confuſion, contrary to Divine Inſtitution. For, *Contiguas pietas juſſit habere domos*: Saints that made up a church, were ſtill Saints in cohabitation; they were as in faith, ſo in Habitation joyned together.

§ 3. It were eaſie to relate the abundant fearful Effects and ſinful conſequents, which this Practice of Church-Separation doth produce; as the diſorderly confuſion, which of neceſſity it doth occaſion: the weakning of the work of the Lord in the place where providence hath ſeated them, and conferred many Mercies upon them: the depriving of Paſtors of their Flock, Spiritual Parents of their Children: the animoſity of Spirit, that is wrought in thoſe

Mr. Blake, loco ſupra citato.

that

that withdraw themſelves, judging them whom they leave as ſcarce Miniſters of Chriſt, nor their congregations as churches of Chriſt; withdrawing then and thence, when and where Chriſt is pleaſed to reſide. I do only urge this, that it is without all Scripture precept or preſident, to depart from the ſolemn and publick worſhip of God, to which his ſpecial providence hath bound us. It was accounted dangerous, not only to eſtimate one Apoſtle above another, as Papiſts do Saint *Peter*; contrary to the ancient practice and doctrine of the church in *Tertullians* time; *Non mihi tam bene eſt, imo non mihi tam male eſt, ut Apoſtolos inter ſe committam*; I am not ſo wiſe (ſaith he;) nay, I am not ſo fooliſh, as to value one Apoſtle above another: But it was thought dangerous alſo to eſteem one Father or Teacher (in the Greek or Latin church) as if he had the mind of Chriſt above another, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh. The Greek Menologie mentions a Diviſion (like that among the Corinthians) in the Greek church, in the daies

Ter. de præſcrip. c. 24.

1 Cor. 2. 16

daies of the Emperour *Alexius*: In which one preferred *Basil*, another gloried in *Nazianzene*, a third extolled *Chrysostome*, until they heard this voice from heaven, ἐσμὲν ἴσοι παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, We are all one before God. It is dangerous then, to extol one of the servants of Christ, who speaks according to the Spirit of Christ, above another: lest (as the Historian reporteth) such Admirers become *Marionites*; that is, like to the man, who first magnified *Zosimus*, next *Macarius*, then the Apostles *Peter* and *Paul*, lastly the Blessed Trinity, which also (blinded through Inconstancy) he renounced totally and finally. This is our fear, this is our complaint. *An.* 1103. *Doroth. Bilioth. Patr. Tom.* 2.

§ 4. This Error of Indetermined church-communion was of old taken for a consequent, yea, a symptome of Luxury and Wantonness. It was observed of the Corinthians, that they were rich and luxurious; and therefore proud and contentious; Πολλοὶ καὶ πλούσιοι καὶ γένος λαμπροὶ and so on, as *Strabo* describeth them. We should therefore beware of such Separation, *Strab. Geor. l.* 8.

paration, as a Mark of Spiritual Wantonneſſe. And we find in *Heſychius*, that Κορινθιάζειν is no better then Πορνεύειν. Thus you may ſee the Genius or Inclination of what people is ſtrongly bent unto this Sin. And though it be true that Grace doth not only poliſh Nature (Morality knoweth how to do that) but even ſubdue it, and change the very frame and conſtitution of it; yet being that it is not wholly conquered in this life, it is like, it will ſhew it ſelfe moſt in ſome domineering corruptions, which generally reign among Chriſtians. This Error tendeth to the renting of the church, the diſgrace of Religion, the advancement of pride, Ignorance, contention, Offence of the Weak, Grief of the Godly, Hardning of the Wicked, and riſing againe of Antichriſtianiſme. For they that voluntarily depart from their determined congregations, if in words they do not maintaine Antichriſt, really they do him more credit, then his chief upholders. Seeing of neceſſity they muſt confeſſe, that in other churches, (which

Ball againſt Can.

(which may be Antichriſtian, for any thing they know) the pure Faith may be entirely profeſſed, the Doctrine of Salvation plentifully preached, the Seals of the Covenant rightly adminiſtred, for ſubſtance; and by the bleſſing of God upon his own Meanes, Chriſtian Soules ordinarily converted and nouriſhed unto eternal Life: Which is more then all the Factors for Antichriſt ſhall ever be able to make good. Upon this account it ſeemeth the Council held at *Nantes*, decreed, that no Peſtor ſhould admit unto Divine Ordinances, any man of another congregation, that willingly deſpiſed the Dvine Exerciſe of his Ordinary Miniſter. And *Gratian* reporteth, that to the ſame effect and purpoſe one *Canon* was eſtabliſhed in *Concilio Meldenſi*.

Conc. Nannat. c. 1. et. 2 Anno. 800. Grat. cauſa 9. qu. 2. Can In Dominicis.

§ 5. Unto all theſe I could add *Muſculus* his judgment, who relateth five dangerous conſequents of this Error.

1. That it caſteth the Soul into danger of its Salvation, while as it departeth from communion

with the appointed and approved Congregation.

Muſcu. Loc. Comm. de. ſchiſmate.

2. That it divideth (as much as in it lyeth) the whole and entire body of Chriſt.

3. That it deſpiſeth not one or two chriſtians, but the whole congregation, which it forſaketh.

4. That it doth not only deſpiſe, but condemn that congregation, as not genuine, but adulterate.

5. That it violates the bond of Peace, which is charity, in that it not only departeth, but ſeduceth others to depart from their proper and peculiar congregation. All which are confirmed and amplified by that Pious Divine. How dangerous this Error is, may further be declared by many teſtimonies of Judicious *Calvin*: Who often telleth us, that ſo highly doth the Lord regard the communion of his church, that he counteth them Traitors and Fugitives, who contumaciouſly ſeparate from any Society or congregation, which maintaineth the true Miniſtery of the Word and Sacraments. And that ſo highly the Lord eſteemeth his

Calv. Inſtit. l. 4. c. 1. per totum. præſertim. § 4. 10.

his church, That whoſoever wrongeth her authority, he judgeth it derogatory to his own Honor, &c. But I ſtudy brevity.

CHAP. XIII.

The cauſes which men pretend for Separation from Parochial Church-Communion, are frivolous and invalid.

And Firſt, Indetermined Church-communion is no part, but an Abuſe of Chriſtian Liberty.

§ 1. CHriſtian Liberty, as it is agreed upon by the learned, is either of the Will, or of the Perſon. Liberty of the Perſon is that which we call chriſtian; and it may be thus deſcri-

bed: Christian Liberty is a Spiritual manumission, whereby the Faithful are by Christ delivered from the Tyranny of Sin, the curse of the Law, and Wrath of God; from the yoke of *Moses*; and from the bondage of things Indifferent; that they might freely, willingly, and cheerfully serve God, to his Glory, the Edifying of their Bretheren, and Salvation of their own Soules. Here are three parts of this Liberty. 1. From Sin and Eternal Death: 2. From the Levitical ceremonies: 3. From the obligation of the conscience in things Indifferent. This last alone belongeth to this Discourse: which is called christian, to distinguish it from civil Liberty, and from the Licentiousnesse which many bad christians use, being a Liberty of the Flesh, and not of the Spirit. Concerning this Liberty, wee may observe two General Rules.

Tilen Syntag. part. 2. disput. 44. Th 1.

1. That all Indifferent things (in themselves) are free and lawful for christians to use or not to use, at their pleasure.

Synop. Pur. Theol. disp. 35. Th. 33. &c.

2. That a Believer must not alwaies

wayes uſe and practiſe his chriſtian Liberty; but that he ought ſometimes to refraine from it, and to moderate it. *M. Parr. on Rom. 14. 21*

Now, there are two Moderaters of this Liberty; the one is General, the other is Speciall.

The General Moderators are Faith and charity; which direct when, where, and how it is to be uſed.

The Special is, Lawful Authority, by Sanctions, civil and Eccleſiaſtical: for the civil Magiſtrate may abridge our Liberties in things Indifferent, for the common good: and the church hath power to determine the uſe of Indifferent Rites and ceremonies in Gods publick Worſhip for the maintaining of good Order and Uniformity.

§. 2. And now, I hope a weak chriſtian may perceive, that this practice of Indetermined church-communion is a Scandalizing by abuſe of chriſtian Liberty: becauſe a Woe belongs to them that Scandalize others by Abuſe of their Liberty in things Indiffe-

rent againſt charity. Our Saviour (*Luk.* 17. 1,2.) diſcovereth as the Sin of thoſe times (which was, to think it little or no ſin, by their pride, and Imperious importunity to ſcandal or grieve an infirme, poor, or inferiour Brother) ſo alſo the puniſhment of Scandals Given, whether by Word or Deed. For otherwiſe Offences are often taken, by perverſe and ignorant ſoules, from good and laudable things done or ſpoken, becauſe they croſs their blind and corrupt Opinions: ſo were the Scribes and Phariſees ſcandaled and offended at Chriſts Doctrine and Works of Mercy. Their Puniſhiment is, *It were better for him, that a Milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the Sea, then that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones*: that is, it were better for a man thus Scandaling one of the meaneſt of Gods children, to be caſt into the moſt deſperate or helpleſſe condition in this life, then to endure the Eternal torments which await him in Hell. There be then ſome Actions Indiffe-

Eng. Annot in locum.

Mat. 15.12.
Math. 11.6.

rent, ſuch as in their own nature be no ſinne, but may be done or omitted without fault; that is, As there be ſomethings ſimply or abſolutely good, which be commanded or forbidden in the Word; ſo ſome be neither good nor evill, in reſpect of the things done, but be of middle quality. Yet in all indifferent things, the honour of God ought to be our marke to aim at, no leſſe then in actions neceſſary and commanded; and that for theſe reaſons. *Pareus in Rom.* 14. 1 *Cor.*10. 30. *Mat.*5.16. *Rom.*11.36 *Col*3.16, 17

§. 3. Firſt, Becauſe it is againſt the Commandment of God, that any man ſhould be a juſt occaſion of ſinning to any other man, either by Word or Deed, to hurt the ſalvation of any, or by building them up unto ſin, by evil example in Sayings, or Doings. 1 *Cor.* 8,9, 10. &. 10 32

Secondly, It puls down heavy judgments on the ſcandalizing perſons, temporal and eternall, without ſpeedy Repentance. *Mat.* 18.8.

Thirdly, It is againſt the example of the Apoſtle, *If meate make my brother to offend*, (ſaith he) *I will eat no fleſh while the* 1 *Cor.*8.13

world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

Fourthly, We break the rule of Charity, which is ever carefull not to trouble, or to do the leaſt harm to the ſoul of any Chriſtian.

*Rom.*14.15

Fifthly, Wee wound our neighbours weak conſcience (which is great cruelty) procuring him by our example to allow, or do ſomething whereof in his conſcience he was never reſolved, or which he knew he ought not to doe, had not wee made him to ſtumble: Nay by our Offence we deſtroy our brother, ſo much as lieth in us, and murther his ſoule (either wholly driving him from the faith, or diſcouraging him) for ſo ſlender a thing, as is a thing indifferent.

*1 Cor.*8.12

*Rom.*14.15

Sixthly, It reacheth not to our brother alone, and to his deſtruction, but even to Chriſt himſelf, againſt whom we ſinne, in wounding any member of his; for ſo ſtrait is the conjunction betweene Chriſt and the Faithfull, that the good or evil offered to them, redounds to him. We ſee then by

*1 Co.r.*8.12
Mat. 25.45
Act. 9.4.

by all theſe Arguments, that ſuch things as in their own Nature be not evil, and which otherwiſe we might do; yet if they prove offences to our brethren, we ought to ſtrain them as things ſinful and unlawful. *Rom.*14.20.

§. 4. Theſe things conſidered, I thus argue: A duty abſolutely neceſſary is not an indifferent duty: but Parochial Church-communion is a duty abſolutely neceſſary: Therfore &c. I mean, *Neceſſitate præcepti.* The Major Propoſition though not obvious to many Abſurdities, I confirme thus.

1. To imagine that a neceſſary duty, is (or can be) an indifferent duty, is the hight of impiety: this were to fetch power and advantage from any ordinance of God, to commit ſinne. This was the iniquty of *Elies* ſons, of falſe prophets, of *Rabſhekah*. *1Sam.*2.17. *Jer.*23.25. 1 *King.*22. 11 *Iſa.* 36.19.

2. This is the only thing that makes us like the Prophets *Cake, not turned*, *Hoſh.* 7. 8. neither raw nor roaſted; Fiſh nor fleſh, in regard of our mixtures and differences in Religion: as it was in *Ahabs* time, when they halted

between God and *Baal*, 1 *King.* 18.21. as in *Samaria*, when they feared the Lord, and yet ſerved the gods of the Nations, 2 *King.* 17.33. as in *Judah*, when they ſware by the *Lord*, and by *Malcham*, *Zeph.* 1.5. as in *Laodicea*, neither hot nor cold, *Rev* 3.15.

3. This was the reaſon of the Lords ſevere proceeding in judgment againſt the Jewes, *Iſa.* 29. 13. their indifferency cauſed their meer formality, in Gods neceſſary ſervice and worſhip, which they frequented and performed only in regard of humane, either Tradition teaching, or Authority maintaining or enjoyning it.

Math. 15.8. *Mark* 7. 6.

4. This was the Jewes end of their Faſting and Humiliation, *Iſa.* 58. 4. to expiate their former ſinful and injurious courſes, that they might return to them more freely again. As *Papiſts* in ſome places are reported to have a common ſaying in their mouths; Wee muſt ſin, that we may be ſhriven, and we muſt be ſhriven that we may ſin. The *Minor* I have proved above by Scripture

Argu-

Arguments; namely, that Parochial Church-Communion is a duty abſolutely neceſſary, implanted by nature, becauſe all Chriſtians are to joyn themſelves to ſome particular Church viſible, when the Lord offereth occaſion: That we are bound to hearing in our determined Congregations, *Neceſſitate præcepti*: becauſe God aſſigneth unto every ordinary Paſtor a portion of his people, to be inſtructed by him: becauſe ſeparation from determined Church-communion is reproved, 1 *Cor.* 1. 12. Becauſe the Lord commandeth to worſhip him orderly, which is not obſerved in indetermined Church-communion: Becauſe we are bound to hearing in our particular Congregations by Chriſts doctrine and example; by the cuſtome of Apoſtolick and primitive times; and by rectified reaſon, &c. Unto theſe I could have added Tradition: but I omitted that; becauſe that way is ſubject to corruption and exception; and at long running, the ſtream of that channel carrieth with it many dregges

of

of erroneous Innovations, Additions, &c.

§. 5. And now I hope, it is manifeſt, that this error is ſo far from being any part of our Chriſtian Libertie, (as the practiſers of it do pretend, confirming *Honorius Reggius* his authentick and above mentioned Propoſition) that it is oppoſite unto it, at leaſt a ſhameful abuſe of it, and a licentious liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, *turning the grace of God into laſciviouſneſſe.* Only with *Auguſtine*, writing on the ſame occation, I conclude, that it cannot be any part of Chriſtian liberty; *Illud autem quod omnino non licet, nec aliquâ neceſſitate mitigatur, ut admiſſum non obſit, eſt ſemper illicitum*: For that which may not any way be done, nor can by any neceſſity be ſo qualified, that it may not be hurtfull after it be done, is alwaies unlawfull to be done. Therefore, to worſhip God on the Lords day Afternoone and Forenoone, is according to Scripture a neceſſary duty, in our Parochiall Churches; and no indifferent matter:

Gal. 5. 13. *Jude* 4.

Auguſt. Tom. 4. *Queſt. Vet. & Novi Teſt. q.* 61.

matter: And therefore no man ſhould be ſuffered openly to make this knowne plaine Sin his practice and profeſſion. The Kings that ſuffered the people to worſhip at the high places, are reproved; though the Text ſaith, that yet they worſhipped only the God of their fathers: and though it was alſo a controverted point; our fathers ſay in this mountaine, and you ſay in *Jeruſalem*, men ought to worſhip, ſaid the woman of *Samaria*, *John* 4. 20.

1 *King.* 22. 43.

2 *Chron.* 33 17.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Secondly, Separation from Church-Communion, for the Paſtors knowne Inſufficiency or Scandalous life, may bee lawfull: otherwiſe it is lamentable, if not intolerable and impious.

§. 1. IT is true, Men pretend many cauſes of their ſeparation from Church-communion, that they may not ſeem ſo unreaſonable as the *Arians*; whoſe violent and virulent endeavour was, that their odious errour might bee received without any ſearch or triall.

Sozom. l. 4. c. 16.

But

But above all other cauſes, they do aggravate the ignorance and ſcandalous Life of their Miniſter. Though ſuch Accuſers ſhould know, that by all Lawes, civil and Eccleſiaſtical, they that are ignorant, ſcandalous, or of known Inſufficiency in the main work, are to be rejected. This ſhould give them full ſatisfaction. For what men of any conſcience or face of common Honeſty, will withdraw from a Society, meerly becauſe of the preſence of ſuch, whom he never accuſed to that ſociety, or proved fit to be rejected? It may be theſe men do feare in their hearts, the juſt puniſhment of Detractors, mentioned in the ancient Canon of the church: If any man do accuſe any Biſhop, Paſtor or Deacon, of any falſe Crime which he can not prove, he ſhould not be admitted into chriſtian communion before his death. Furthermore, let him know, that objecteth his Paſtors Infirmities, that he is bound to ſearch his own heart and wayes, and remember what may be ſaid againſt himſelfe, and *caſt the beam*

Concil. Elibert. Cap. 75. An. 305.

out

out of his own eyes; at least, to censure others, as an humble christian, that is sensible of his own miscarriges, and imperfections: and how much allowance the best men must have, that they may pass for currant. They who will be Accusers of others, should begin at home: For as saith *Nazianzen*; How shall they reprove the sin of others who have not Ἀφ' ἑστίας τὴν παῤῥησίαν, confidence in their own Innocency. But, as the most ravenous and hurtful birds, are commonly most quick-sighted, so are the most wicked men, most ready and skilful to find faults in others. The Eye seeth not it selfe, not any thing which is too neer it; so neither see we our own faults, except set at some distance, and in another person: so *David* saw his fault, in the person of the rich Oppressor, till then he could not in himselfe. We ought not to despise one another for Natural or common infirmities, when we are daily groaning under them our selves, and in the hands of the same Physician. Οὐδὲν ἀναμαρ-

Nazia. Ep. 26. Cesar.

2 Sam. 12. 2. &c.

τανεῖν

τανεῖν ὅτι Θεῦ, καὶ πάντα καλὸν ἦν: It is the property of God alone to be faultleſſe and perfect. If Chriſt would not take us with all our faults, and diſtinguiſh between his own and ours, between us and our ſins, we were loſt. It much concerneth us therefore to have a good opinion of our Teachers. For in this our Saviour examineth his Diſciples, not concerning his Doctrine, but concerning his Perſon; *Whom do men ſay, that I the Son of man am?* *Mat.* 16. 13. And yet, as Chriſt loves our ſins never the more, for all his incomprehenſible love to us, no more will he allow us to love the ſins of Inſufficient and ſcandalous Miniſters. And as we muſt not think well of them, ſo neither muſt I ſpeak well of them. Therefore.

§ 2. If Miniſters be inſufficient or ſcandalous, all conſcionable people ſhould endeavour ſpeedily to caſt them out. Neither ſhould any man plead compaſſion to them. For it is cruel compaſſion, which for feare of bringing a man and his Family to poverty, will

will both connive at his proceeding in ſuch hainous guilt, and at the ſtarving and everlaſting Damnation of mens ſouls. The devil loves ſuch Mercy as this. In the Primitive times, if any Paſtor (of what degree or quality ſoever) did fall away from the Doctrine of the Orthodoxe Church, into any ſchiſme, or hereſie, or lewdneſſe of Life, he was degraded and deprived of all Eccleſiaſtical Liberties, priviledges and endowments. This is not only witneſſed by *Socrates* in the Synodical Epiſtle of the firſt councel at *Nice*; but alſo recorded by *Euſebius*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret*. Neither may they be forborne or tolerated in their Office upon their Repentance. For as Repentance will never cure their Inſufficiency: So it muſt be a very notable Repentance, that muſt at all (much leſſe ſuddainely) readmit a ſcandalous perſon into the Miniſtery. In the Primitive Church, after ſuch hainous ſinning, they would admit him to the Miniſtery no more, were he never ſo penitent, though they did admit him, ad-

Socrat. l.1. c.6.
Sozom. l.1. c.14.
Euſeb l.10. c.4.
Theod. l.1. c.9.
Editionis Latinæ Grynæi.
Ann.1570.

ad Laicam Communionem, with the people. As for their maintenance, it is forfeited by all law, Divine and humane, ſeeing it was given them only, as unto Paſtors, for the worke of Chriſt, and ſervice of the Church only, *Quamdiu ſe bene geſſerint*; therefore ſo farre as they are able (ſaith a Pious, Judicious, and learned late Writer) they ſhould make the Church reſtitution of the profits and emoluments, which for ſo many yeares they have ſo unjuſtly received: it being before God but plain robbery, and one of the moſt hateful kinds of robbery that can be imagined, to ſtarve and deſtroy mens ſouls, and then to take hire for it.

Conc. Car. Anno 258. *et conc. Ro.* 3.487.

Mr. Baxter concord. p. 107

Moreover, ſeeing the ſincere keeping Covenant with God in Chriſt, is a chief part of our Chriſtian Religion, and a matter of abſolute neceſſity to our ſalvation; It is as hard truſting the guidance of that man againe, who hath once betrayed us and the Church unto ſinne and ſuperſtition; as it is to truſt a Commander who once turned traitor,

and

and would deliver up his Army to the power of the Enemie. Nature teacheth to forsake such Commanders, in obedience to their Supreme Soveraigne, and for safety of our selves. Lastly, An ignorant or scandalous Pastor, is so farre from being a gracious Mediatour between God and his people (as he should be) that he is like to draw rather wrath upon himself, then procure favour for them. Yea, the Poet telleth us, that they endanger their flocks; Αὐτὰρ μῆλα κακοὶ φθείρουσι νομῆες, Evil shepherds infect their flocks. They who sinne in Gods House or Sanctuary, are said to *provoke the Lord to his face, and to do evil before his eyes*; as if a Servant should doe things directly crosse to his Masters mind and command, to his face. Now as when the fear or knowledg of man is removed, for a man freely to indulge himself a liberty of sinning, is a high provocation, and to make a practice of it, would argue a desperate case; So when their sinne cometh to be publick, it is the more grievous,

Eng. Ann. on Eccl. 19. 22.

Homer. Odys. l. 17.

Isa. 65. 3.

vous, being committed by them who ſhould have beene exemplary for Piety and Religion, do ſuffer in their ſinne, for want of ſincerity. If ſo notable a Prophet as *Moſes* eſcaped not puniſhment (for the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *It went evil with him for the Iſraelites ſake,*) though others provoked him to ſinne; how much ſhall they be ſubject to Gods judgment, who by Ignorance or Scandal, cauſe Gods children to ſin? *Pſal.* 106. 32

§. 3. But howſoever an Ignorant or Scandalous Paſtor ought to be caſhiered; yet it is not in the peoples power to reject or relinquiſh one that is already their Teacher, and ſeparate from Church-communion with him, except when he is utterly intolerable, and all orderly meanes for his ejection do faile. It cannot be proved from Scripture that any people may reject or depoſe their Miniſters: much leſſe a leſſer part of a Church may do it, when the greater diſſenteth: No, nor a greater; becauſe it tendeth to confuſion. Mr. *Baine* telleth you, that Paſtor and people are as indi-

vidually

vidually joyned together, as husband and wife: That as no cauſe can ſeparate husband and wife, but Adultery, ſo nothing beſide inſufficiency (through ignorance or ſcandalous living) can ſeparate Paſtor and people. For as he is ſacred in his firſt inſtalment, ſo in the performance of his office he was honourable in the times of the Heathen. *Tertullian* tells us, that heathen Prieſts were crowned: A ſymbole that they could not be degraded, nor caſhiered. And the firſt Crown which the Romans uſed, was their *Spicea Corona*, given as a Religious Enſign in honour of their Prieſts. *Honoſque is non niſi vitâ finitur, & exules etiam, captoſque comitatur*, ſaith *Pliny*: nought but death could terminate this honour; which was their companion both in exile and captivity. Sure I am, that it was decreed in an ancient Councel, That the people muſt not be permitted to elect (and therefore not to reject) their Paſtor. If your Miniſter then be unable to teach you, do not admit him at firſt:

Tert. de Cor. Mil. c. 10.

Plinius Nat. Hiſt. lib. 18. c. 2.

Concil. Laodic. cap. 13 Anno. 320

But

But if he be able to teach you, and guide you, be ruled by him, even in things that to you are doubtful; except he teach you any ſingular points; and then take the advice of other Miniſters in trying it. Expect not that he ſhould humour you, and pleaſe your fancies, and ſay and do as you would have him. It is contrary, not only to all examples in any age of the Church, but to the office of Paſtors, and Duties of the people (in Scripture) to guide their Paſtors, and not to be guided by them, but to joyn with other Congregations on the Lords day, either in the forenoon or afternoon, as much as with their determined Pariſh or Congregation. Yet *Nazianzen* teacheth us, That he that thus deſpiſeth his Paſtor, is a vain man, and by reaſon of his preſumption, a new *Dathan* or *Abiram.* And we complain to the Lord in the words of the ſame holy Father; that in all our ſufferings this thing is the moſt ridiculous, and yet moſt to be pityed; that we are the ſame men that are injured

Naz. Ep. 26

Naz. Ep. 31

and

and accuſed: For ſome men object one thing againſt us, others another, according as their either mind, or manners, or miſchievous paſſions do ſuggeſt; and the moſt favourable men to us, do neglect or contemn us; and after we have ſpent our ſtrength and ſpirits for their good, they caſt us aſide as vile and diſhoneſt veſſels. Thus *Nazianzen*, with whom we againe doe complaine, that the world ſeeketh not Paſtors, but Orators. And *Irenæus* before him, ſheweth us, that it is the duty of a faithfull Paſtor to ſtudy the Truth, and not Eloquence. I remember that *Sozomen* writeth that *Aetius* (the Eunomian Atheiſt) his Eloquence was ſo matchleſſe, that it made his errour impregnable. And *Euſebius* reporteth, that *Meletius* the Heretick, for his eloquence was called, *Mel Atticum*, The hony of *Greece*. This I write, not for any evil eye I bear to them, that are graced with that gift of God: but that we muſt not with *Moſes* refuſe the meſſage from heaven, becauſe we are Βραδυγλωσσοὶ, and have not

Naz. Or. 32.
Iren. Præf. l. 1. n. 18.
Soz. l. 4. c. 22.
Euſ. l. 7. c. 31

mon

ſo glib a tongue as others: nor with *Jonah* turn our back becauſe the work may ſeem ungrateful. If he ſend us to labor among thorns, yet have we a graciousMaſter;his work is good,his end wil ſatisfie us: We ſhall then have the grapes and figs, which thornes and thiſtles would not yeeld us. Only I beſeech every one to remember, that the complaints of Gods Meſſengers, though proceeding ſomewhat from heat of paſſion, are often ſeconded withdiſmal and dreadful effects. The childhood of the children that contemned *Eliſha* his Miniſtry,exempted them not from puniſhment, becauſe it reſtrain'd them not from ſin.

Jerem. 11. 22.

2 *King.* 2. 24.

§. 4. Hence it may appear, that the tying of our ſelves to the obſervation of Parochial Church-communion, doth not force any man to ſubmit to a weak Miniſter, when he might have a better. Chriſt hath taught us to ſeek after knowledg without the quenching of zeal; and to maintain zeale, without deſpiſing knowledge: To ſeek after truth in the way of Peace, and after Peace in the way of Truth; as knowing how

neere they dwell together. And in the practice of this duty *Augustine* saith Divinely, It is a farre lesse sin to be unlearned then unteachable.

Contra Acad. l. 3. c. 7. Christian Concord. p. 35. & 36.

But for confirmation of this Assertion, I desire the Reader to peruse the discourse of Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, whose words as my intended brevity doth not permit me to transcribe; So I note,

1. That the publick welfare and unity of Christian Churches, is to be preferred before the pleasure, yea, or edifying of any single member; and what confusion will follow the plucking up of Christs, and the Magistrates, and the Churches bounds.

2. If all the people may freely and lawfully joyn themselves with that Church that hath the ablest Teacher, then almost all the world must go to a few men, and leave the rest; then *Barnabas* may be forsaken, if *Paul* be the chief speaker; and then able mens Churches will grow to that bigness that they will be no Churches, the Matter being too big for the End and Form.

Act. 14.12

3. That Ministers are Free-

men

men as well as the people; and therefore every mans desire must not deprive them of their Freedome; besides that, the Lord assigneth to every Pastor a freedome to instruct a portion of his people: Gods work must be done before our own; and the saving of souls and propagation of the Gospel, be preferred before our private comforts.

4. God hath more means then Ministerial abilities, to encrease mens graces, and procure their salvation: for he that keeps in Gods order under a meaner honest Minister, is like to be a more humble thriving Christian, then he that will break that order, under pretence of edification: but God usually chastiseth men for such disorders, as we may see in daily experience. For God suffereth the same professors (to our great hearts grief) to turn unto doctrinal or practical evils, for their breaking Gods Order, and the Churches Unity. The speciall work and duty required of every Minister, is to mind their people of their duty to God, and constantly to mind God, and soli-

Isa. 62.6. *Ephes.* 1.16 *Phil.* 1.3.4.

cite him for his people. And for this purpoſe, the Paſtor (if faithfull) is not like the ſword-fiſh, which carries a weapon, but no heart: nor like the children of *Ephraim*, who being harneſſed and carrying bowes, wanted [redacted] courage, and turned back in the day of battel. O what readineſſe and promptitude ſhould there be in people to have communion with ſuch Watchmen! The unwearied *Cant.* 4. 11 Miniſter of Chriſt, travels through all the Gardens of Learning, and ſucks ſomething from every flower, that he may bring his veſſels and treaſures full of knowledg for the comfort of his hearers, but they will not hear. Not only *Naz. Orat.* 1. is his ſervice and office ſacred (for it is Μεσιτεία Θεῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, a Mediation between God and man) but his perſon, his very lips, which *Baſil* ſtileth χείλη τῦ Χριϛῦ, *Baſil. t.* 1 *in Pſal.* 44. *Rom.* 10. 15 the Lips of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle termeth his feete beautiful.

§. 5. Addreſſe your ſelves then in the Armour of God, all you meſſengers of God, to fight hereafter with the enemies of God.

Event

Event hath sealed Saint *Pauls* prophecie; The time is already come, men will not suffer wholesome Doctrine. Uncharitable censures of stile, of method, of voice, of phrase, of gesture, are but senselesse imputations of the prophane multitude; far inferiour (if they were true) to the first flourishes of a combate in earnest. The worldlings heavy censure condemneth down-right, both manner and matter, and the whole substance of your preaching. And for your persons, you are not greater then *John* the Baptist and our Saviour; sooner therefore shal ye want a World, then a Theater, wherein, though the best do favour you, by most be sure to be counted, Περικαθάρματα, Παριψήματα, Ἀναθήματα, what not? piacular, pestilential, execrable fellowes. All the filthy scoffes and slanders that Satans Scavengers can rake out of the sinkes of all professions, are thought over-clean to throw in their faces, who would make the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ to shine unto them. *Je-*

2 *Tim.* 4.3.

1 *Cor.* 4.12 13

2 *Cor.* 4 4

Hieron. Epiſt. ad Demetriadem.

rome ſaid truly, *Semper virtutibus contradicitur*, vertues are ſtill contradicted. Pretend the world what the world can, here is the head and the heart of the controverſie: Contrariety breeds Enmity, Enmity cauſeth Separation, and Separation ſuppoſeth danger (from the party avoided) of infection.

§. 6. But thou, O man of God, *Tu ne cede malis, ſed contra audentior ito*: be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Such an Antiperiſtaſis muſt encreaſe and enkindle zeale, if thy profeſſion depend not upon faſhion, and thy conſcience upon company. For though Gods powerful Spirit ſhould ſuſpend his operation, yet canſt thou not forget the reaſon of a man, and bruitiſhly be driven with the drove, much leſſe abandon common ſenſe; and without any motion of thine owne, like a nail in a wheel, only move as thou art moved, and turn as thou art turned. They who never once dreamed of ſalvation by Chriſt, held it not the leaſt part of their glory

Rom. 12. 21

glory to ſtirre a courſe like Antipodes, clean oppoſite to the liking of the multitude. He in *Plutarch* applauded, ſuſpected his ſpeech; Οὐ δήπου τί κακὸν λέγων ἐμαυτὸν λέλυθα; Hath any bad ſpeech fallen from my mouth without my knowledge? And *Antiſthenes* commended, was afraid of his Deeds; Ἀγωνιῶ μή τι κακὸν ἐργασωμαι: I am in agony, leſt I have done ſome miſchiefe. What in them without the law was voluntary, the ſame the law of Chriſt (if wee belive *Auguſtine*) impoſeth upon us as neceſſary; *Recuſas eſſe in corpore, ſi non vis odium mundi ſuſtinere cum Capite:* thou refuſeſt to be in the body, if thou wilt not ſuffer the hatred of the world with thy Head. Sure the currant credit of the godly in *Gregory* his time, was, *perverſorum rogatio, vitæ noſtræ approbatio*: Wicked mens detraction, is the approbation of our lives. And in all times the rebuke of Chriſt, was the Religion of Chriſtians. And as for our way of preaching, the Reverend Provincial Aſſembly

Phocion apud Plut. Lacrt. in Antiſt.

Auguſt. in Joan. tract. 87.

Greg. in Ezek. Homil. 9.

Heb. 11. per totum.

Vindication of *London*, doth piouſly and judi-
ſet forth ciouſly complaine, that though
Nov. 2. wee are farre from juſtifying
1649. *page* any indiſcreet or paſſionate ex-
82 preſſions, yet we conceive it to be very hard meaſure, to have our integrity arraigned and condemned for humane infirmities. And wee hope, we may without boaſting, ſay thus much; That the ſetled Miniſtry of *England* was never more cenſured, moleſted, impoveriſhed, and yet never more pious, peaceable, and painfull. Wherefore, that I may not number up numberleſs encouragements, ſtand upon your guard within the limits of your daily warfare with the world; ſince faith is the victory that overcom-
1 *John* 5. 4 eth the world. Only conſider
Heb. 12 3. him that endured ſuch contradi-
Tertul. ad ction of ſinners. *Deus Pater Ago-*
Martyras, *nothetes*, *Xyſtarches Spiritus ſan-*
cap. 3. *ctus*, *Epiſtates Jeſus Chriſtus*; *Corona æternitatis*, *bravium*; *Angelicæ ſubſtantiæ politia in cœlis*, *gloria in ſecula ſeculorum.* He that hath ſaid, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, *John* 16. 33. He is both Commander and ſpe-

ctator

ctator of your combate, He is both Judge and Rewarder of your courage, and conquerour of your enemie; *He will give you the Crowne of glory that fadeth not away.*

CHAP. XI.

Thirdly, Other imaginary, and imaginated Pretences are answered.

§. 1. ALthough all Divine Truths be precious, yet controverſies are ſo diſtaſtefull to me, that I reſolved againſt them. But he that made us, muſt rule us: and he that putteth us into the Vineyard, muſt meaſure out our work: and commandeth me to ſpeak briefly to the ſubſequent objections. For this is another Office of holy diſcipline: *Non ſolum bona oſtendere,*

Tert. Apolog. c. 39. *ſed mala refutare*: Not only by ſound doctrine to exhort, but likewiſe to convince the gainſayers, *Tit.* 1.9.

§. 2. Firſt, Some ſay, they ſeparate from a determined Church-communion, becauſe of diverſity of doctrine; as if they knew not where to find the truth. It is true, *Solomon* complaineth, That men have ſought many inventions or imaginations; as in other things, ſo likewiſe in Doctrine, whereby men are drawn from the ſimplicity of their Creation. The Apoſtle likewiſe complaineth of a wind of doctrine, whereby Chriſtians began to be blown from the ſtedfaſtneſſe of the Truth. *Auguſtine* ſaith, that Satan ſeeing that Idolatrous images would downe, he bent his whole device in place of them to erect divers imaginations; that people in ſtead of images, might bow down to theſe, and worſhip them. Since which, it hath been his daily practice, either to broach divers and ſtrange doctrines never heard of before: or to revive the old, and new dreſſe them; and

Eccleſ. 7. ult.

Eph. 4. 14.

Auguſt. de civ. Dei lib. 18. cap.

Heb. 13. 9.

2 Cor. 2. 17

and to mingle them (for that by themſelves they wil not utter) with the Apoſtolical doctrine, that ſo he might vent them. And this indeed is the diſeaſe of our age; and the juſt complaint we make of it. There hath good diſpatch been made of images; but imaginations in their ſtead, are deified and worſhiped, carrying the Name and Credit of Apoſtolick Doctrine. To prevent this miſchief, We are no where commanded to Separate from Church-communion; but to try the ſpirits; to prove all things; to hold faſt that which is good: and that we may do that, we are to pray, that he would open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of his Law; and to pray for knowledge and underſtanding, and to endeavour to have our ſenſes exerciſed to diſcerne both good and evil. The advice that *Syſinnius* preſented to the Emperour *Theodoſius* (ſtudying how to put an end to the differences in diverſity of Doctrine, that then troubled the Church) was to avoid all diſputations with Sectaries,

1 *John* 4.1. 1 *Theſ* 5.21

Pſal. 119.18 *Heb.* 5.14.

Sozom. l. 7. *c.* 12.

ries, and to demand of them (when they petitioned him) whether they would ſtand to the judgement of ſuch as were Teachers in the Church, before it was divided? eſpecially, where their judgment diſſented not from the Scriptures. Ancient Fathers thought it meet, that they that would take upon them to interpret the Scriptures, ſhould put in ſureties, that the ſenſes they gave, ſhould be no other then the Church in former time had acknowledged. All that came after the Apoſtles, are commanded to labour for knowledg and learning, and not to utter their own imaginations, or do deſire to be believed upon their bare word: for that were to have dominion of their Auditors Faith. *Say I this of my ſelfe?* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *ſaith not the Law this alſo?* Give I this ſenſe of mine own head, or hath not Chriſts Church heretofore given the like? Which one courſe if it were ſtrictly kept, would rid our Church of many falſe imaginations, which now are ſtampt daily, becauſe every man upon his owne

Bp. Andrewes Ser. Worſhip imaginat.

1 *Theſ.* 5 12
1 *Tim.* 5 17
1 *Cor.* 9.8.

owne ſingle bond is truſted to deliver the meaning of any Scripture.

§. 3. Secondly, Others pretend, that they ſeparate from Church-communion for neglects and corruption in diſcipline. For anſwer to this: I would they read what their own Mr. *Cotton* of New *England* writes: that the many notorious ſcandalous perſons that were found in the Churches of Iſrael, did only argue the neglect of Eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, in the toleration of ſuch publick ſcandals in the Church. And thus none of the men of God (who could not be ignorant of the Churches duty, and their ſin in ſuch neglects) ever attempted to Separate from that which was in this ſort faulty. All was not right in the exerciſe of diſcipline, in the Churches, planted by the Apoſtles. The Church of *Corinth* was cenſured as very faulty, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. So was the Church of *Smyrna*, *Revel.* 2. 14. No leſſe faulty was the Church of *Thyatyra*, *Rev.* 2. 20. Neither could the Church of *Sardis* be free, ſeeing the greateſt part were openly bad, there

Mr. *Cottons Holineſſe of Church-members p.* 21

there being but a few that had not defiled their garments, *Rev.* 3. 4. And yet nothing heard by way of advice for any to make ſeparation, nor reproof for their holding up Communion, nor any one inſtance of a ſeparatiſt given. And here Mr. *Blake* ſheweth, that the godly non-conformiſts in England, who had a low opinion of the diſcipline then exerciſed, were ſo zealous againſt Church-ſeparation, that Mr. *Parker*, Mr. *Paget*, Mr. *Ball*, Mr. *Brightman*, and others, have left behind them large evidences of their zeale againſt ſeparation from Parochial Church Aſſemblies. It is more then ſtrange, that when the Apoſtles had by commiſſion from Chriſt planted Churches, and were to leave them to be propagated in future ages, yet would wholly be ſilent of this ſeparation, but leave us by our dark imaginations to diſcover it. In which, we are in danger to ſet our threſhold by Gods threſhold (of which hee ſadly complains;) or rather, juſtle out Gods threſhold with ours.

Mr. *Blake Covenant*, c. 31. p. 238.

Ezek. 43 8.

§ 4. Thirdly, Others pretend that

that they ſeparate from Parochial Church-communion for prophaneneſſe of the people, and corruption in converſation. But neither doth this admit of ſeparation, provided that Doctrine be ſuch in which men may have communion for Edification. If we look upon the people of *Iſrael* throughout the revolution of all times, we may find high Titles given them, even when they lived in all kind of ſin and Diſobedience. They had Titles given them of ſingular glory, by reaſon of priviledges, which they enjoyed by their call into church-fellowſhip, as, children of God, Gods peculiar ones, his portion, his heritage, the apple of his eye, and many the like Elogies: In the mean time their Qualifications were as low, as their Titles high; their converſation no wayes anſwering their calling, but branded to be ſtiffnecked, of an Iron ſinew, an Adulterous, a Sinful Nation, a People fooliſh and unwiſe, as *Sodome* and *Gomorrah* unto the Lord: And yet the Prophets and righteous perſons keep their reſidence

Deut. 14. 12. *et* 32. 9. *Zach.* 2. 9. *Rom.* 9. 4. *Deut.* 9. 6. *et* 32. 6. *Iſa.* 1. 4. *et* 48. 4. *Ezech.* 32. 16.

dence among them, held communion with them, and saw no ground of separation from them. It seemeth a great contradiction to some, to name men at all believers, Saints, or Professours, when their lives evidence an unsutableness to such a glory; yet we know the churches to whom Epistles are directed in Scripture, are so honoured, as we may see in their frontispieces: and the most upright hearted among them, had communion with them, when yet they did wrong and defraud one another, when they profaned the Lords Table, where Fornicators, Idolaters, Luke-warme, &c. And yet the Apostles did not leave them, but made it their businesse to reclaim them. The advice that was sometime given to a Maid, that for Religions sake would retire her selfe to a solitary life; she was told, *Aut de fatuis Virginibus es, aut de prudentibus: si de fatuis, Congregatio tibi necessaria est; si de prudentibus, tu Congregationi:* If she were bad, she need the city to better her; if good, the city needed her: So we may say to the

1 *Cor.* 3.3. *et.* 6. 7. 2 *Cor.* 12.20 *Rev.* 3.1.16

the ſeparatiſts from Parochial-Congregations; either they ſtand in need of the Church, or the neceſſities of the Church call for their help and aſſiſtance.

§. 5. As for all other pretended cauſes of ſeparation, Learned *Zanchius* at length proveth, that ſo great is the Authority of the Church viſible (whether Univerſal or Particular) that none may with hope of impunity, deſpiſe her Doctrine or Diſcipline, much leſſe ſeparate from her Communion: becauſe to deſpiſe the Church, is to deſpiſe Chriſt; to divide the unity of the Church, is to divide Chriſt, and to crucifie him afreſh; and to ſeparate from the Church, is to ſeparate from Chriſt; for *extra Eccleſiam non eſt Salus*; out of the Church there is no ſalvation. Laſtly, if any do pretend the practice of forrain reformed Churches for Church ſeparation. I anſwer,

Zanch. t. 7. part 2. col. 74 &c.

1. That the piety and prudence of the Worthies of this Nation, was much more admirably valiant for the Lord, in eſtabliſhing Lawes with Penalties againſt this profane

profane licentiouſneſſe, then the practice of the contrary can be imitable or warrantable.

Jer.9.3.

2. Forrain Churches were never ſo ſenſible of, nor had occaſion to bewail this prophaneneſſe, ſo much, as we in theſe laſt ſeven or eight years; wherein all the Ghoſts of the miſcreants of former ages, have been let looſe from hell, in full ſwarmes to infeſt this Nation, more then ever the locuſts did the Land of Egypt.

See Blond. Honor. Reg. &c.

3. We ought to follow others, no further then they are followers of Chriſt and his Goſpel. *Non vivendum exemplis, ſed Legibus:* And therefore I will not ſay again what Orthodox Divines have in this point, until our adverſaries ſhall make it their task to prove ſome infirmity or inſufficiency, in that which they have written.

Seneca.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Serious and frequent Admonition ought to bee inculcated againſt this Errour.

§. 1. IT is very true, *Nunquam ſine querela, tanguntur ægra,* you can never touch the ſore, without the grief of the Patient. All would be pleaſed, *Nulli grata reprehenſio eſt*, ſaith *Salvian*; *None love reproof, none but the wiſe, Prov.* 9.8. And that which is worſe; the moſt wicked caſt-away would rather heare his own falſe praiſes, then true reprehenſion; and be deceived with jeering applauſe, then ſaved by wholeſome Admonition. And yet Separatiſts from determined Congregations, muſt no leſſe be admoniſhed, then other ſinners

Sen. de Ira c. 10. *Salv. de G.D. l.* 8 *initio.*

ſinners; ſo long as there is any hope they will amend. That charge given to the Prophet, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. is ſix times alledged in the New Teſtament, to warn them, *that if they turne not, God will whet his ſword, and be glorified in his juſtice upon them, who made no account of his mercy.* And it is a juſt thing with God, when men wilfully winke, and ſhut their eyes againſt the light, to ſtrike them ſtark blind, as he did the Aſſyrians, and the Sodomites, and *Elymas* the Sorcerer, and to daſh out their eyes, *Deut.* 28. 28. It is true, Gods primary intention in ſending his meſſengers, is for the good of his people; for he giveth them Paſtors according to his own heart, which do feed them with knowlede and underſtanding: yet in a ſecundary place, it is for to leave the wicked inexcuſable, and to juſtifie his proceeding toward them. See 2 *Cor.* 2. 15, 16. *John* 9. 39. Thus the Paſtor muſt do his duty, and referre the iſſue or ſucceſſe unto the Lord: yea, hee muſt deal plainly and roundly, as the

Pſal. 7. 12

2 *King.* 6 18

Gen. 19. 11.

Jer. 3. 15.

the Lord himſelf doth, *Ezek.* 2. 3, &c. *Matth.* 10. 14. But chiefly with publick and common ſins (as this of Church-ſeparation is) leſt he ſeem to allow of them, and ſo become guilty of them by his allowance. For,

§. 2. Though *Saul* acted not in the murder and Martyrdome of *Steven*, yet his conſent ſpake him guilty of the ſame crime. A mind to tolerate evil, is ſin in the ſeed, which time bringeth forth, *Jam.* 1. 14,15. God eſteemeth the evil we would do, as done, though we have not done it, and ſo juſtly puniſheth it. There is an adultery of the heart, and murder of the heart: *Meritò autem malus punitur Affectus, etiam cui non ſuccedit Effectus*, ſaith *Auguſtine*; deſervedly is an evil Affection puniſhed, though the Effect (or Deed) thereof follow not. They that allow of the evil which others do, become guilty of the ſame ſin by their allowance. So were the Jewes guilty of all the blood ſhed by their Fathers from *Abel*, ſo many yeeres before they had any being in the world: becauſe in ſhedding

Act. 8. 1.

Mat. 5. 28. & 22 7.

Auguſt. de civ. Dei lib. 16. *c.* 4.

Mat. 23. 35

ſhedding innocent blood they ſhewed their conſent with them, who firſt did ſo. O that wee would conſider their eſtate, who are now pleaſed with all the injuries done to Gods ſervants; like *Gallio.* But above all men, *Duces eſſe principes erroris, eſt prophanum*; It is moſt prophane for Princes to be leaders into error, ſaith *Theodoret.* For the chief among the people to be ringleaders of this errour is deſperate. In regard of others, *magnates ſunt magnetes,* Great men have an attractive vertue, like the loadſtone, and therefore *Potentes Patenter tormenta patientur*, ſaith *Ferome* often: The mighty ſhall be mightily tormented. Oh that we could remember, that great men are not alwayes wiſe!

Acts 18.17

Theod. in Ferem.

Job 32.9

§. 3. It is a dangerous thing once to erre from the truth. There is in man a miſchievous ſelf-love, putting him on to defend his errours, by erring more. *Arnobius* noteth well, *Quod ſemel ſine ratione feciſtis, &c.* That which ye have once done without reaſon, ye defend, leſt ye ſhould ſeem to

Arnob. adverſ. Gent. lib. 6

hav

have once been ignorant: Yee think it is better *non vinci*, not to be overcome, then to yield to a confeſſed truth. But a true Chriſtian will rejoyce and ſay, *Ut ille mei Victor eſt, ita ego mei Triumphator erroris*: as my adverſary hath conquered mee, ſo I triumph over my errour. Contempt of our Miniſtry in this Church-ſeparation, produceth a wilfull ſhutting the eyes againſt the light of the Goſpel, and taketh away all ability of believing to ſalvation. They could not believe (*John* 12. 39.) that is, ſay *Chryſoſtome* and *Theophylact*; They would not. They will not indeed believe: Nor is it in ſuch a mans power to be willing to believe. For as Faith is the gift of God, ſo is a true and hearty deſire thereof, which God beſtoweth on them only, whom hee will therein ſatisfie and make bleſſed: and juſtly giveth not unto thoſe who undervalue his mercies, and deſpiſe appointed Ordinances. Oh be not then like thoſe obſtinate men, who will not hear their appointed Paſtor, bur wilfully ſtop

Cecilius apud Minut. Felic.

Epheſ. 2.8. *Mat.*5.6.

ſtop their ears, and ſhut their eyes, that they may the more ſecurely run upon their owne deſtruction, and neither hear nor ſee that which might ſtay them, and make for their converſion and ſafety. Deafneſſe in a ſharp Fever (ſay Phyſicians) is a ſign of madneſſe: more miſerable are obſtinate ſinners. The lunatick have ſome excuſe; the Will is not in the fault, where men are not themſelves, ſaith *Salvian.* The more condemnable are thoſe, *Qui ſani inſaniunt,* who are wittingly mad. Where there is wilfulmaliciouſneſs, ἐκεῖ ἡ ἀποχὴ τῆς χάριτος, there is abſence of Grace, ſaith *Cyril Hieriſolymit.* Therefore God juſtly deſerteth thoſe, who unjuſtly firſt deſert him, following their obſtinacy, by giving them up to ſpiritual blindneſſe, withdrawing the common light which he had given them. His judgments ever follow, never precede mens ſinnes: where his external decree and omniſcience precede, it is to appoint impenitent ſinners to puniſhment, not to ſin.

Hippocr. Aphor.

Salv. de g. D. lib. 6.

Cyril. Hier. Catech. 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Some Antidotes against the Infection of Parochiall Church Separation.

§. 1. IT hath ever been Satans policy to begin in perſwading men to Worldlineſſe, Fleſh-pleaſing, Security, Preſumption, and utter neglect of God and their ſouls, at leaſt by preferring their bodies and worldly things: but where this will not take, but God awakeneth men effectually, he next ſetteth them on a Religion not commanded; and would make poor ſoules believe, they do nothing, if they do not more then God hath commanded them; and unleſſe they ſeparate from their appointed and determi-

Mr. Bax. direct. 26. pag. 352.

ned Church-communion. When Satan hath no other way to deſtroy Religion and Godlineſſe, he will pretend to be Religious and Godly himſelf; and then he is alwaies over-religious, and over-godly in his materials. It is true, a man cannot ſerve God too much, formally and ſtrictly conſidering his ſervice, much leſſe love him too much: but we may do too much materially, intending thereby to ſerve God; which though it be not true Righteouſneſſe, yet being intended for Righteouſneſſe, and done as a ſervice unto God, is by *Solomon* called Over-much Righteouſneſſe: where Interpreters conceive, the Name of the mean, is given to the extreme. For a man may many times do a thing conſcienſciouſly, and upon an opinion of duty, and thereby involve himſelf in much ſinne, and ſorrow: when indeed there was no neceſſity ſo to doe: As 1 *Sam.* 15.21. *Acts* 26.9.

*Eccleſ.*7.16 *Eng. Ann. in loc.*

§ 2 I know it is ſtark madneſſe in the profane ſecure world, to think the doing of no more then God hath commanded us, is doing

ing too much, and more then needs: but this is to blaſpheme the moſt high, by denying his Goodneſſe, his Wiſdome, his juſt Government; to blaſpheme his Lawes, as too ſtrict or preciſe; and to reproach his holy waies, as if they were grievou s, intolerable or unneceſſary. Much more is their madneſs, in charging the godly with being too pure, and making too great a ſtir for heaven, and that meerly for godlineſſe and obedience; when (alas) the beſt fall too ſhort of what Gods Word, and the neceſſity of their own ſouls do require; that their conſciences do more grievouſly accuſe them of negligence, then the barking world doth of being too diligent. Yet much more mad are worldlings, to lay out ſo much time, and care, and labour for earthly vanities, and to think that heaven and eternal happineſſe, and the eſcaping of everlaſting damnation, are matters not worth ſo much adoe: but may be had with a few cold wiſhes; that no labour ſhould be thought too much for the world, fleſh, and the divel, and

Luk. 17.10.

Mark 8.36

every little is enough for God. Yet *Quiſquis plus juſto non ſapit, ille ſapit*: that is, in our Saviours phraſe; *We are as ſheep in the midſt of Wolves, wee had need then be wiſe as Serpents, and harmeleſſe as Doves.* It was the commendation of *Agricola* in *Tacitus*; *Retinuit (quod eſt difficillimum) ex Sapientia modum*: He kept a [redacted] critie in his Wiſdom

Mat. 10. 16.

Lactant. l. 4. *c.* 2. ſaith, *Neque Re[redacted] entia ſuſcipiend[redacted] Religione pr[redacted]* Religion ſ[redacted] without wi[redacted] wiſdome i[redacted] gion. F[redacted] work is un[redacted] redoubted

Mr. Baxt. Direct. 26. *pag.* 352. And whoe[redacted] would overdo[redacted] a ſubtil deſtroy[redacted] by the deſtroye[redacted] Tragedy could I here[redacted] the divels acting! And [redacted] myſterie of the Helliſh art of deceiving could I open! By occaſion of our preſent quarrels with hereticks, the Old Serpent ſteps in, and will needs be a ſpirit of zeal

zeale, in cauſing many profeſſours to ſeparate from their appointed congregations; and inducing them (or rather ſeducing them) to overdo. O that God would open the eyes of his churches in *England* to ſee this Satanical ſtratageme.

§. 3 Then let us not be too much bent on a thing, nor juſt in our own opinion: but let us temper zeal with godly wiſdome, [illegible]h others, lean not on [illegible]derſtanding, flatter not [illegible]y opinionative confi- [illegible]wn abilities to judg [illegible]ſit to be done: but [illegible]our ſelves. The [illegible]ou art, the more [illegible]nſpect thou wilt be; [illegible]ary, the more ſafe. [illegible] avoiding of overdo- [illegible] point in hand, let us [illegible] practice theſe few Di- [illegible].

Rom. 12. 3.

Firſt, Labour for knowledge and a ſound underſtanding: a ſound Judgment is a moſt precious mercy, and much conduceth to the ſoundneſſe of Heart and Life. *Male vivitur ſi de Deo non bene creditur.* A weak Judgement is

2 *Tim.* 1. 7.

Aug. de C. D. l. 5. *c.* 10.

every little is enough for God. Yet *Quiſquis plus juſto non ſapit, ille ſapit*: that is, in our Saviours phraſe; *We are as ſheep in the midſt of Wolves, wee had need then be wiſe as Serpents, and harmeleſſe as Doves.* It was the commendation of *Agricola* in *Tacitus*; *Retinuit (quod eſt difficillimum) ex Sapientia modum*: He kept a mediocritie in his Wiſdome. *Lactantius* ſaith, *Neque Religio ulla ſine ſapientia ſuſcipienda eſt, neque ulla ſine Religione probanda ſapientia*: no Religion ſhould be undertaken without wiſdom, neither ſhould any wiſdome be allowed without Religion. For all overdoing in Gods work is undoing, as ſaith a late redoubted Warrier of the Lord: And whoever you meet with that would overdo, ſuſpect him either a ſubtil deſtroyer, or one deluded by the deſtroyer. Oh what a Tragedy could I here ſhew you of the divels acting! And what a myſterie of the Helliſh art of deceiving could I open! By occaſion of our preſent quarrels with hereticks, the Old Serpent ſteps in, and will needs be a ſpirit of zeal

*Mat.*10.16.

*Lactant.l.*4. *c.* 2.

Mr. Baxt. Direct. 26. *pag.*352.

zeale, in cauſing many profeſſours to ſeparate from their appointed congregations; and inducing them (or rather ſeducing them) to overdo. O that God would open the eyes of his churches in *England* to ſee this Satanical ſtratageme.

§. 3 Then let us not be too much bent on a thing, nor juſt in our own opinion: but let us temper our zeal with godly wiſdome, adviſe with others, lean not on our own underſtanding, flatter not our ſelvs in any opinionative confidence of our own abilities to judg of all that is fit to be done: but think ſoberly of our ſelves. The more humble thou art, the more wary and circumſpect thou wilt be; and the more wary, the more ſafe. Now for the avoiding of overdoing, in the point in hand, let us conſtantly practice theſe few Directions. *Rom.* 12.3.

Firſt, Labour for knowledge and a ſound underſtanding: a ſound Judgment is a moſt precious mercy, and much conduceth to the ſoundneſſe of Heart and Life. *Male vivitur ſi de Deo non bene creditur.* A weak Judgement is *2 Tim.* 1.7. *Aug. de C. D. l. 5. c. 10.*

easily corrupted: And if it be once corrupted, the will and converſation will quickly follow. Our underſtandings are inlets of entrance to the whole ſoule. The moral Philoſopher hath well concluded, *Omnis malus eſt ignorans, & ſolus ignorans malus eſt*; ignorance is virtually every errour.

Derodon. diſp. 1. in Ethicis. §. 4

Secondly, Be ſure you make conſcience of the great duties you are to perform in your families: Teach your children and ſervants the Knowledge and fear of God: pray with them daily and fervently: Read the Scriptures and good books to them: Keep them from ſin; eſpecially ſee that the Lords day be wholly ſpent in theſe exerciſes, and not in ſports or idleneſſe.

Thirdly, Remember alwaies that ye are bound to be followers of Peace and unity: He that is not a ſon of peace, is not the ſon of God. All other ſins deſtroy church-communion conſequentially, but diviſion and ſeparation demoliſh it directly. *Juſtin Martyr* profeſſeth, that if a Jew ſhould keep

Dial cum Trapertit. pag. 265.

keep the ceremonial Law (ſo hee did not perſwade the Gentiles to it as neceſſary) yet if he acknowledg Chriſt, he judgeth that he may be ſaved, and he would have communion with him as a brother. And I profeſſe, that I believe, that profeſſors which diſturb the peace of the church, and ſeparate from their brethren; nay I fear, leſt they ſhould prove a firebrand in hell, for being a firebrand in the church.

Fourthly, Keep the maſtery over your fleſh and ſenſes. Few fall from God, but fleſh-pleaſing is the cauſe; Remember who hath ſaid, *If ye live after the fleſh, yee ſhal die.* Think of this when ye are tempted, not only to luſt, drunkenneſs, worldlineſs, &c. but alſo whenye are tempted to ſeparate from your Parochial Aſſemblies: for the Apoſtle hath pronounced ſuch to be carnal. You little think what a ſin it is, even to pleaſe your fleſh further then it tends to help you in the ſervice of God. *Multis enim ſervict, qui corpori ſervit*; He hath many maſters, that ſerves his fleſh; and after

*Rom.*8.5,6, 7 & 13,14

Seneca Ep. 14.

Honeſtum ei vile eſt, cui corpus charum eſt; Honeſtie is vile to him that endeareth his body. Happy, were many a Chriſtian, if they had learned this leſſon, which an infidel teacheth them; then would they beware, leſt conſcience loſe its tenderneſſe; then would they live in a conſtant readineſſe and expectation of death, having their converſation in heaven, while they live upon earth.

Fifthly, Look upon all preſent actions or conditions with a remembrance of their end. *Solon* deſired *Cræſus*, τέλος ὁρᾶν, to behold the end. Deſire not a ſhare in their proſperity, who muſt pay as dear for it, as the loſſe of their ſouls: Be not ambitious of that honour which muſt end in confuſion: nor of the favour of thoſe that God will call enemies. Fear not that man that muſt ſhortly tremble before God, whom all muſt fear.

Pluter. de Adulat. & Ambit.

Sixthly, Deal faithfully with every truth you receive; take heed of ſubjecting it to carnall intereſt. If once you have affections that can

can maſter your underſtandings, you underſtand not the Truth. This changeth Chriſtians into Mules or Aſſes: as *Antony* the Hermite dreamed of the *Arians*. For when you have a reſolution to caſt off any duty (as Parochial Church-communion) you will firſt believe it is no duty. And when you muſt change your judgement for carnal advantages, you wil make the change ſeem reaſonable and right. And evil ſhall be proved good, when you have a mind to follow it. *Soz l. 6. c. 5.*

Laſtly, Apprehend the neceſſity and uſefulneſſe of Chriſts Officers, Order, and Ordinances for the proſperity of his Church. Tell your *Archippus* that he fulfill his miniſtry, as in abandoning all ſin in converſation, ſo all errors in doctrine: otherwiſe by the ancient canons of the Church he hath forfeited his miniſtry. Paſtors muſt guide you, not ſeduce you, or lead you Jeſuitically blindfolded *cæcâ obedientiâ*. Pray for your Miniſter that utterance may be given him, that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the myſtery of the *Concil. Milev. 2. c. 24 25. Anno 416.* *Epheſ. 6. 19*

Gōſpel. Watch carefully, that no weakneſſe of the Miniſter draw you to a diſeſteeme of the Ordinances of God, nor any of the ſad miſcarriages of Profeſſors ſhould cauſe you to ſet leſſe by Truth or Godlineſſe: Wrong not Chriſt more, becauſe other men have ſo wronged him; Quarrel more with your owne unfitneſſe and unworthineſs in Ordinances, then with other mens. It is the frame of your own heart, that doth more to help or hinder your edification, then the quality of thoſe whom you joine with.

§ 4 But the ſad experience of theſe times of ſeparation from determined church-communion, hath much abated the confidence of the godly, that Antidotes wil prevail with the vulgar or ordinary Chriſtian: and cauſed them to have lower thoughts of mens docility and tractability, then ſometimes they have had, and doe look on man as a diſtempered inconſtant creature, of a natural mutability in his apprehenſions and Affections: though God,

Ariſt. Eth. lib. 7. c. 14. in fine.

God, who knowes the heart, and knowes his owne decrees, may know his ſincerity, and foreknow his perſeverance. The fruit of Church-ſeparation, appeareth, that now when Satan hath a deſign to burn up the Nurſeries of Learning and Religion, how few are watering Gods plants? when the greedy mouth of ſacriledg is gaping for their maintenance, how few are voluntarily adding for the ſupply of its defect: when the Goſpel is ſo undermined, the Miniſtry ſo maligned, and their maintenance ſo envied; how few are they that appeare for them? How few are like that Noble man, who publickly tore and rent the impious Edict of *Dioclesian* the Emperour againſt Criſtians? What God will yet do with us, we cannot tell: but if he will continue his Goſpel to us, theſe few may have the greater comfort in it: if hee will forſake a proud and unworthy people, yet may theſe few ſouls have comfort of their ſincere endeavours, they may eſcape the gnaw-

Euſeb. l. 8. c. 5

ings

ings of conſcience, and the publick curſe and reproach which the hyſtory of this age may faſten upon them who would either in ignorant fury, or malicious ſubtilty, or baſe temporizing cowardize, oppunge or undermine the Goſpel; or in perfidious ſilence look on, whilſt it is deſtroyed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Concluſion.

§ 1. HAving taken the boldneſſe to deliver my Reaſons againſt this common Sin and Error: I humbly crave, that if ever Chriſtians would have their ſoules converted, they would labour to frequent Divine Ordinances in their due circumſtances. If we look to the quality of the Action, *Saul* did well (ſaith *Arnobius*) when he offered Sacrifice unto God: But we muſt not conſider the quality of the Fact, but the Pride of the contemner; for there are many Duties, *Quæ cum bona ſint opera, perniciem pariunt, cum non eo ordine, quo ſunt conſtituta, peraguntur*: Which, though they be good works, bring damnation, when they are not done in that order as they ſhould. No man will be much wrought on by that which he deſpiſeth. The great

1 *Sam.* 13. 18 *Arn. contra Serapion.*

cauſes

causes of this contempt are, a Perverted Judgement, and a graceleſſe Heart. It is no more wonder for a Soul to loath Divine Ordinances, that ſavoureth not their Spiritual Nature, then it is for a ſick man to loath his food. Where a ſanctified Judgment is wanting, the moſt helliſh Vice may ſeem a Vertue, and the moſt ſacred Ordinance of Divine Inſtitution may ſeem as the waters of Jordan to *Naaman*. Oh! How many Soules may curſe theſe wretches in Hell fire for ever, that have by them been brought to contemn the Meanes that ſhould ſave them! And let the greateſt that are guilty in this crime, read *Cyprian* his words, and tremble. What greater crime can there be (ſaith he) then to have ſtood up againſt Chriſt (In his Officers and Ordinances)? Then to have ſcattered the church of Chriſt, which he hath purchaſed with his blood? Then to have fought by the fury of hoſtile Diſcord againſt the unanimouſly agreeing people of God? Who though themſelves ſhould repent, and turn to the church, yet

Cyprian Epiſt. 72.

yet can they not recover and bring back with them, thoſe ſeduced by their Example; or thoſe that being by death prevented, are dead without the church, whoſe Souls at the day of Judgment ſhall be required at their hands, who were the Leaders of them to Perdition, &c.

§ 2. And now I have given you my beſt advice, for the avoiding this Error. The manner of it is imperfect, and too much mine own: but for the main matter, I dare ſay, I received it from God, in his Holy Scriptures. And from him I deliver it to his People, and his charge I lay upon them, that they entertain and practiſe it. Yet I know there is a remnant of Paganiſme and Infidelity in the beſt of chriſtians concerning the Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures. The chief cauſe (beſides many others) which perverteth the Underſtandings of men in this point, in my poor obſervation, is this. When men have deeply wounded their conſciences by ſinning againſt Knowledge, and given the Victory to their fleſhly Luſts, ſo that they

Auguſt. de Fide & Op. c. 4.

must either deeply accuſe and condemn themſelves, or deny the Scriptures; they chooſe that which ſeemeth the more tolerable and deſireable to them: and ſo, rather condemn the Scriptures, then themſelves. Theſe are, *Lucifugæ Scripturarum* (as *Tertullian* calls them) Owles or Bats; which can no more take heed unto that light that is the Life of the World, then Bats do unto the light of the Sun. And what Malefactor would not do the like, and except againſt the Law that doth condemn him, if that would ſerve his turn? And when men, that are engaged in a ſinful courſe, do ſee that the Word of God doth ſpeak ſo terribly againſt it, they dare not live in that ſinne, while they believe the Scripture, becauſe it is ſtill wakning and galling their guilty conſciences: but when they have either caſt away their Belief of the Scriptures, or otherwiſe miſtaken them through miſinterpretation, miſapplication, &c. then conſcience will let them ſin with more quietneſſe. The like may be expected from thoſe I oppoſe. For theſe men

Tert. de Reſur. Carn. c. 47.

men refuſe their Phyſick, becauſe it is unpleaſant, and not becauſe it is unwholeſome: yet at laſt their Appetite ſo maſtereth their Reaſon, that they will not believe any thing can be wholeſome, which goes ſo much againſt their ſtomack. *Ahab* believed not the meſſage of *Micajah*; not becauſe he ſpake falſly, but becauſe hee ſpake no good of him, but evill. Men will eaſily be drawn to believe that to be true, which they would faine have to be true; and that to be falſe, which they deſire ſhould be falſe. But alas! how ſhort and ſilly a cure is this for a guilty Soule? And how ſoone will it leave them in uncurable Miſery! 1 *King.* 22. 8.18.

§ 3. Only I muſt crave this of the Reader, that my confeſſed weakneſſe be no prejudice to Gods Truth: and that he will not judge of the cauſe by the Perſon, nor take the Name or Perſon for a Fault: Which is the thing that the ancient chriſtians did ſo deprecate of the Pagans; and therefore I hope every Chriſtian will grant. For in regard of the churches preſent

ſent neceſſities, I dare not give over, for all my Imperfections. Though I have ever been of a Spirit too eaſily diſcouraged, and ready to ſay as the Prophet, *I will ſpeak no more in his Name* : yet God hath ſo ſuited his Providence to my Infirmities and Neceſſities, as not only to cure my backwardneſſe, but alſo to convince me of the pleaſantneſſe of his Work. I am aſſured that it was the Lord that ſent me into his Vineyard, and without him none ſhall force me out. He that gave me fewer Talents then others, will Expect but an anſwerable Improvement at my hands: but be they never ſo ſmall, I dare not hide them. He that calleth for two Mites, will accept them: He deſpiteth not the day of ſmall things. Hee ſometime revealeth that to *babes*, which he hideth from the *wiſe and prudent*: *For the Wiſdome of the World is fooliſhneſs with God, and the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer then men: and no fleſh ſhall glory in his ſight.* The Lord grant, that I may ſo uſe the ſmall abilities that I have, that I be not condemned as an unpro-

Jer. 20. 9.

Mat. 25. 16.

Mat. 11. 25.

Zech. 4. 10.

1 *Cor.* 1. 25.

profitable and unfaithful Servant: and then I do not feare being condemned for their ſmalneſs.

§ 4. More I would ſay, but I feare to ſpoile the elegancy of learned *Camero*, in his Epiſtle *ad Theologos Leidenſes*, by Engliſhing it: wherein is the ſumme of what I would ſay, and thither I refer the Reader. In the mean time, look upon my aberrations, where you find them, with pity and Pardon; And where you ſhew me that I have erred (as a man) you ſhall ſee that as a Chriſtian, it was not my want of love to the Truth, but want of light to diſcover it, that hath miſled me from it My Prayer is, that the Lord would ſave his People from that ſpirit of Pride, hypocriſie, ſeparation, and Giddineſſe, which is of late gone forth, and is now deſtroying and making havock of millions of Soules in *England*. And that the Lord would keep his People unſpotted of the guilt of thoſe Sinnes, which in theſe dayes have been the ſhame of our Religion, and have made us a Scandal and Scorn to the World.

Can. pag. 720. folio.

And

And pardon, O Lord, thy Servants Sin, : for I do daily diſhonour thy Holyneſſe, and diſgrace thy Work and Service by my weakneſs and unworthineſſe. I bewaile from my heart, that my Apprehenſions are ſo dull, my Affections ſo stupid, and my Expreſſions ſo low and unbeſeeming thy Service. Remember with whom thou haſt to do. What canſt thou expect from duſt, but levity? or from corruption, but defilement? I know thou wilt be ſanctified in them that come nigh thee. And before all the people thou wilt be glorified. But though weakneſſe and irreverence be the fruit

of

of mine own Corruption; yet the fire is from thy Altar, and the work is of thy commanding. Oh therefore wash away all my Sins with the blood of the Lamb, which taketh away the Sin of the world. Imperfect or none, must be thy Service here. Oh take thy Sons excuse; The Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak.

Gratias tibi Domine Jesu.

1039. L. 11

THE PARASYNAGOGUE PARAGORIZED.

OR

A Parenetical confutation of the Epidemical Error, which aſſerteth, Separation from Parochial Church-communion.

Demonſtrating

Their practice, who on the Lords day neglect the publick Exerciſes of Divine Worſhip in their Parochial Congregations, and frequent (*cæteris paribus*) other Churches, to be Anti-ſcriptural.

By *John Leſly*, Miniſter of the Goſpel at St. *Michaels*, neer St. *Albans* in *Hertfordſhire*.

London, Printed by *Thomas Maxey*, in *Thames-ſtreet*. 1655.

is limited with certaine Circumſtances, and circumſcribed: ſo that may be ſaid to be indetermined, whoſe Adminiſtration and Performance, is Caſual, Occaſional, Accidental. The Philoſopher telleth us, That Circumſtances are the particular Conditions of ſingular Acts. Now circumſtances are determined in Scripture but in general, and left to Humane determination *in ſpecie*. Therefore *Aquinas* concludeth, That the conſideration of circumſtances, doth chiefly belong unto Divines; and that they make any Action either good or bad. And *Scotus* teacheth, That the Determination of a thing is twofold (oppoſite unto a twofold Indetermination) namely, a Determination unto Contradictories, or Poſitive Diverſities: and thence concludeth, that *Determinatio ad alteram partem Contradictionis ſtat cum indeterminatione ad diverſa*. And therefore the determination of Solemn Worſhip to Parochial Church-communion on the Lords Day, doth conſiſt with his Indetermined Worſhip at other times

Ariſt. Eth. l.3.c.1.

Aquin. 12. 7,2.0. & 12.18. 3.0.

Scot. Sent.l. 1.d.28 quæſ 4.n.12.

and

nd places on certaine occaſi-
ons.

The ſum of all is, That Deter-
mined and Parochial Church-
Communion, is a Duty im-
planted by Nature, otherwiſe it
were not abſolutely a Moral-Na-
tural Duty to worſhip God ſolemn-
y at all; for every ſuch Duty,
which we by the Law of Nature
owe unto God, cannot but be per-
etually and univerſally poſſible to
ll; he being perpetually exiſtent
nd preſent with us, and we with
im. And ſo by the Law of Na-
ure it is Sacriledg againſt God, to
eparate from determined Church-
Communion, chiefly without cauſe.
But I paſs from Nature to Scrip-
ure.

CHAP. IV.

All Christians are to joyne themselves to some particular visible Church, when the Lord offereth Occasion.

§ 1. MY second sort or kind of Reasoning against the Practice I oppose, is deduced from plaine Scripture. And here, though I might plead, as *Tertullian* did, *Scriptura negat, quod non notat*; That the Scripture denyeth that which it teacheth not: And seeing this practice hath no Scripture-warrant (for any thing that I ever yet saw or heard) the Practisers of it should fear that Woe denounced, not only against them that adde or diminish, but likewise that adulterate the sense of Scripture. For according to *Tertullians* Rule, the Scripture is as much wronged

Tert. de Monogam. c. 4.

Tertull. de præscr. c. 17

wronged by perverting the ſenſe, as by corrupting the words of it. But to deal with them with their own weapons: Where is it ſaid, That you are not to joyne in a determined Church Communion, to hear your own Paſtor? Where are thoſe words written? If they anſwer, Negatives cannot be proved. To this we reply, And where is that ſaid? for we find it no where in Scripture, that Negatives cannot be proved. Yea, we find that Chriſt proved Negatives; for he proved, that himſelf was not a Spirit, That God was not to be tempted, &c. If Negatives are not to be proved, then Negatives are not to be believed. Ours is an Affirmative, which they yeild may be proved; theirs is a Negative, which they ſay cannot be proved: We then have the better of it; there is hope of proof on our ſide; theirs is deſperate. But though I might deſire them to prove their Practice by Scripture, yet becauſe with *Tertullian*, I adore the fulneſſe of the Scripture, I will ſhew their practiſe, who on the Lords Day neglect the publick exerciſes of Divine Wor-

Luk. 24. 39. *Matth.* 4. 7

Hooker Eccleſ. Politie. l. 2. *Sect.* 6.

Contra Hermog. c. 22.

ſhip in their determined Parochial Congregations, and frequent (*cæteris paribus*) other Churches, to be Anti-ſcriptural. Thus:

§ 2. Firſt, all are to joyn themſelves to a viſible Church; either Formally to be a member thereof, or Materially by confeſſing the Faith of the true viſible Church, when God offereth occaſion.

1 Becauſe we ought to be ready to give an anſwer or confeſſion to every one that asketh, 1 *Pet.* 3.15.

2 Becauſe *he who denyeth Chriſt before men, him alſo will Chriſt deny before his Father, and the holy Angels*, Mat. 10.33.

3 Becauſe Chriſt hath promiſed his preſence to his Churches, as he *walked in the midſt of the golden candleſticks*, Rev. 2.1.

4 Becauſe Faith cometh by hearing a ſent Preacher, *Rom.* 10.24.

5 Becauſe ſeparation from a viſible Church is condemned, *Hebr.* 10. 24. *Jude* 19. 1 *John* 2. 19.

6 Becauſe the godly ever eſteemed it a rich favor of God, to lay hold

hold on the skirt of a Jew; that is, to have any communion, even as a door-keeper in the House of the God, and have desired it exceedingly, and complained of the want thereof, *Psal.* 84.1,2,10.

Zech. 8.3. *Psal.* 27.4. *et* 42.1. *&c et* 63.1,2.

§ 3 Yet if any die without the Church, having faith in Christ, and want opportunity to confesse him before men, as repenting at the hour of death, their salvation is sure, because they are within the Church. So is that Maxime to be taken, *Extra Ecclesiam non est Salus*; None can be saved who are every way without the Church, Visible and Invisible; as all perished who were not in *Noahs* Ark. As for those who deny any being of a Church universal visible, I would learn of them into what particular Church the Eunuch was received, and by Baptism actually and solemnly admitted; or whether he was still no Church-member, but an alien and stranger to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, not admitted to the Church? And to what particular Congregation the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists joyned

Cam. de Eccl. p. 272. in fol

Mr. Blake Cov. cap. 30 in fine.

themſelves by Covenant ?

§ 4 There is then a neceſſity of joyning our ſelves to ſome particular viſible Church ; but it is not *Neceſſitas medii, ſed præcepti* ; It is not ſuch a neceſſity that all are damned who are not within ſome viſible Church. For *Auguſtine* truly ſaith, *There be many Wolves within the Church, and many Sheep without.* But if the Lord offer opportunity, all are obliged by his Commandment of confeſſing Chriſt before men, to joyn themſelvs to ſome Viſible-church: for all Denying, is Idolatry, in *Tertullians* judgment. And he denyeth Chriſt, that is not with him, or for him. So our Saviour teacheth, *Luke* 11.23. *He that is not with me, is againſt me ; and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth;* that is, He that declareth not himſelf to be on my ſide, is againſt me. There are no Neuters ; for there is no man but he is either Chriſts or Satans. As in war, he that fighteth not for his Prince is an enemy. As they which are to gather in their Maſters harveſt, if they neglect it, are ſcatterers and deſtroyers ; ſo they that will not defend Chriſts honor

Auguſt.

Tert. de Idolol. c. 22.

Eng. Annot on Mat. 12. 30.

honor, at leaſt profeſſe and confeſſe it (wherein they can) betray his cauſe, and are enemies. Yet there is a fellowſhip with the viſible church internal, of hidden Believers. In the *Romiſh Babel* this is ſufficient for ſalvation, *Neceſſitate medii*. But they want opportunity to joyne themſelves to the reformed viſible churches; yet do they ſin in the want of profeſſion of the Truth, and in not witneſſing againſt the Antichriſt; which is anſwerable to an adjoyning themſelves to a viſible church. And ſo thoſe who do not profeſs the faith of the true viſible church (the Lord affording opportunity) deny Chriſt before men. And this external fellowſhip is neceſſary to all, *Neceſſitate Præcepti*: though the Lord graciouſly pardon this, as an infirmity in his own, who for fear of cruel perſecution, often dare not confeſſe Chriſt.

Rutherford Due Right of Presbytery. c. 5. Sect 5. p. 78.

CHAP. V.

We are bound to Hearing in our own determined Congregations, Neceſſitate Præcepti.

§ 1. SEcondly, Howſoever we be not bound unto hearing in our own Congregations, *Neceſſitate Medii*, as if Gods grace were tyed to the Meanes this way: Yet *Neceſſitate Præcepti*, we are, if we conſider Gods Commandment: In no other way can we expect the Lords ordinary preſence, promiſe, and acceptance: See *Heb.*13.17. 1 *Theſſ.*5.12. It is a curſe, to be as *Sheep having no ſhepherd*, Matth. 9.36. that is, ſcattered abroad, not knowing where to get food, and expoſed to many Seducers, as people without a Paſtor. There is indeed a Scattering enforced, when men are driven by violence from Gods

*Pſ.*119.176
*Jer.*50.17.
Zach. 13.7

Gods ſervice, but that is not the ſcattering meant by our Saviour; but a voluntary ſtraying, when people are not willing only, but love to wander; as *Jer.* 14. 10. a wandring out of ſelf-will; not a corporal, but a ſpiritual ſtraying, by which men of themſelves wander from God, and go aſtray from the way of Truth and Life; from thoſe wayes and courſes that God hath preſcribed them in his Word, and directed them unto by his Spirit: as they, Pſal. 14. 3.] *Pſal.* 58. 3.

§ 2. It is the Duty of all conſcientious Chriſtians to ſet themſelves under ſome particular Miniſter as their Paſtor, and to hear him conſtantly. Dr. *Ames* proves that this Ordinance of the Lord is the Duty of all Chriſtians; namely, to ſettle themſelves under ſome one particular Paſtor, and to joyne themſelvs to a determined or particular Church. *Ames. de Conſc. l. 4. c. 24. quæſ. 1*

1 Becauſe it is Chriſts inſtitution, *Math.* 18. 17. in which there is a neceſſity, *Non Præcepti tantum, ſed & Medii*: He addeth five Reaſons more, which for brevities ſake I omit.

2 Be-

2. Becauſe every Flock muſt be under an Overſeer, *Acts* 20. 28. & 18. 23. If we be the flock of Chriſt, we muſt have a ſhepherd, who ſhall feed us in Chriſts ſtead.

3 Becauſe our perfection and edification dependeth ordinarily upon our particular Teacher, to which end Paſtors were given, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. and particular Guides, as *Philip* to the Eunuch.

4. Becauſe Paſtors are to preach conſtantly, 2 *Tim.* 4, 2. eſpecially on the Lords Day they ſhould not omit to preach Forenoon and Afternoon. Dr. *Ames* notes, that to the Sanctification of that Day, exerciſes of publick Worſhip in a Church, well conſtituted, and enjoying her Liberty, ought to bee held forth forenoon and afternoon. Halfe the Lords Day ſpent in Religion will not ſuffice to diſcharge from the ſecond due attendance on that Day: For if the Law of Nature determine for every worky-day of mans life, at leaſt a double attendance upon God, as neceſſary unto all men, much more on the Lords day. The continuance being not here

Ames. de Conſc. l. 4. c. 33. quæſt. 4.

Sabb. Red. part 1 c. 11. Sect. 5.

here determined, the ſervice may be ſo ſuddenly diſpatched, as nothing but want of will and Devotion can be aſſigned, as the cauſe of not tendring that double proportion on the moſt buſie day, that any man hath in his whole life.

§ 3. Furthermore, reverend Mr. *Collings* proves by four Arguments, that it is the duty of private Chriſtians, who have ſet themſelves under particular Paſtors, not to neglect them when they do preach. For, *Vindiciæ Miniſt. Evang. quæſt.* 5. p. 82.

1. To what purpoſe made they choice of him?

2. He hath a particular overſight over them committed to him, *Act.* 20.28. 1 *Pet.* 5.2. 1 *Theſſ.* 5.12. *Hebr.* 13.17, 24.

3 A Paſtors more eſpecial tye to his own Flock then another, (*Act.* 20.28. 1 *Pet.* 5.2.) argues that they are more eſpecially tied to him, and that he is appointed to feed them.

4 Chriſtians own Paſtors have a more ſpecial diſpenſation of the grace of God given them to themward, *Eph.* 3.2. Of which more fully, *Chap.* 6. Now

Now then, lay theſe together; I it the duty of private Chriſtians who have ſet themſelvs under thei particular Paſtors, to attend divine Ordinances on the Lords day, delivered forenoon and afternoon? But ſee the times, Reader! It is lamentable to conſider the little uſe that is made of Gods Ordinances in moſt places; Preachers too often (I tremble to ſpeak it, or write it) be uſed like Poſt-horſes, ſpurred on till they be ſpent, and then a freſh is called for; in the mean time the world ſits ſtil, and thinks to be ſaved for hearing. Reader, mourn for this, weep for this; for this boads a Judgment; the Lord will ſurely reckon for the blood of his ſervants, ſpent, as well as ſhed. See *Nazianzen* his complaint, *Epiſt.* 31.

Dr. Harris, Peters Enlargm. in Prefat.

Nazian. ad Baſ.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

God aſſigneth unto every ordinary Paſtor a portion of his people, to be inſtructed by him.

§ 1. THirdly, A Miniſters Calling is termed in Scripture, *The Grace of God*; as *Rom.*1.5. *Epheſ.*3.2. And it is ſo termed in a twofold reſpect: *Rav. in voce Gratia. num.*3. *diſt.* 3.

1. Becauſe the deſigning to the Miniſterial Calling is of grace.

2. And the faculty qualifying us for it, is from the free favour of God.

The Miniſterial Function then hath theſe two properties:

1 It is founded in the free pleaſure of God, *Gal.*1.15.

2. All the ſufficiency which enableth any man to diſpence the myſteries of the Goſpel, it is the meer

meer grace of God, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. From theſe premiſſes I infer, That as God giveth Miniſters their Calling, ſo alſo their people, toward whom he will bleſſe their labours. It is true, the care of all the Chur-
2 *Cor.* 11. 28 ches was laid on the Apoſtle; but not ſo now: for whereſoever God now giveth a Miniſterial Calling, there he giveth a people, of whom the Miniſter may ſay, Towards you grace is given me of God.

Bains ad locum.

This is Mr. *Bains* his obſervation on *Epheſ.* 3. 2. That Chriſtians own Paſtors have a more ſpecial diſpenſation of the grace of God given them to them-ward. Whence he concludeth; This ſhould inſtruct people to depend eſpecially on thoſe who are ſet over them, for thoſe are they who are furniſhed from God in an eminent manner with grace towards them: They are fooliſh Pigeons that know not their owne Lockers; and fooliſh ſheep that know not their ſhepherds voice; and fooliſh people that know not their Miniſter.

§ 2. Hence then it is evident, That God aſſigneth to every ordinary Miniſter a portion of his peo-

ple.

le. This is the difference be-ween Ordinary and Extraordinary Pa-ors. For ordinary Miniſters, the Lord commanded to faſten them o certain places; *Ordain Elders n every City*, Tit. 1. 5. And in the Councel of *Chalcedon* it is decreed, *Nemo ordinetur abſolutè*; Let none e Ordained at large, leſt he prove wandring *Jonathan*. *Caranza* ddeth three other Councels, that ecreed a wandring Levite not to e admitted into communion: the eaſon is rendred by the Canoniſts, *Ne dicatur, Mendicat in palæſtra in-elix Clericus.* Every Miniſter hen muſt be ſeparated, authorized, nd have allotted to him a certaine ortion of people, which may bee nſtructed by him: which the di-ninutive Ποίμνιον, not Ποιμνὴ, ay ſeem to inſinuate in the Scri-ture. Now as God giveth to e-ery Paſtor his ſeveral Flock, ſo e will that we take pains in lead-ng them. We muſt not Ἀλλο-τριοεπίσκοπειν, be Biſhops in o-her mens Dioceſſes, leſt God ſay, Who requireth this at your hand? When the Lord lighteth Candles, e findeth candleſticks on which

Conc. Chalced. c. 6. An. 451. Epaunen. c. 2. An. 515. Mogunt. c. 22. An. 829. Tribur. c. 27 An. 895.

and would deliver up his Army to the power of the Enemie. Nature teacheth to forſake ſuch Commanders, in obedience to their Supreme Soveraigne, and for ſafety of our ſelves. Laſtly, An ignorant or ſcandalous Paſtor, is ſo farre from being a gracious Mediatour between God and his people (as he ſhould be) that he is like to draw rather wrath upon himſelf, then procure favour for them. Yea, the Poet telleth us, that they endanger their flocks; Αὐλὰς μῆλα κακοὶ φθείρυσι νομῆες, Evil ſhepherds infect their flocks. They who ſinne in Gods Houſe or Sanctuary, are ſaid to *provoke the Lord to his face, and to do evil before his eyes*; as if a Servant ſhould doe things directly croſſe to his Maſters mind and command, to his face. Now as when the fear or knowledg of man is removed, for a man freely to indulge himſelf a liberty of ſinning, is a high provocation, and to make a practice of it, would argue a deſperate caſe; So when their ſinne cometh to be publick, it is the more grievous,

Eng. Ann. on Eccl. 19. 22.

*Homer. Odyſ. l.*17.

Iſa. 65.3.

vous, being committed by them who ſhould have beene exemplary for Piety and Religion, do ſuffer in their ſinne, for want of ſincerity. If ſo notable a Prophet as *Moſes* eſcaped not puniſhment (for the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *It went evil with him for the Iſraelites ſake,*) though others provoked him to ſinne; how much ſhall they be ſubject to Gods judgment, who by Ignorance or Scandal, cauſe Gods children to ſin? *Pſal.* 106. 32

§. 3. But howſoever an Ignorant or Scandalous Paſtor ought to be caſhiered; yet it is not in the peoples power to reject or relinquiſh one that is already their Teacher, and ſeparate from Church-communion with him, except when he is utterly intolerable, and all orderly meanes for his ejection do faile. It cannot be proved from Scripture that any people may reject or depoſe their Miniſters: much leſſe a leſſer part of a Church may do it, when the greater diſſenteth: No, nor a greater; becauſe it tendeth to confuſion. Mr. *Baine* telleth you, that Paſtor and people are as indi-

vidually

vidually joyned together, as husband and wife: That as no cause can separate husband and wife, but Adultery, so nothing beside insufficiency (through ignorance or scandalous living) can separate Pastor and people. For as he is sacred in his first instalment, so in the performance of his office he was honourable in the times of the Heathen. *Tertullian* tells us, that heathen Priests were crowned: A symbole that they could not be degraded, nor cashiered. And the first Crown which the Romans used, was their *Spicea Corona*, given as a Religious Ensign in honour of their Priests. *Honosque is non nisi vitâ finitur, & exules etiam, captosque comitatur*, saith *Pliny*: nought but death could terminate this honour; which was their companion both in exile and captivity. Sure I am, that it was decreed in an ancient Councel, That the people must not be permitted to elect (and therefore not to reject) their Pastor. If your Minister then be unable to teach you, do not admit him at first:

Tert. de Cor. Mil. c. 10.

*Plinius Nat. Hist. lib.*18. *c.*2.

*Concil. Laodic. cap.*13 *Anno.* 320

But

But if he be able to teach you, and guide you, be ruled by him, even in things that to you are doubtful; except he teach you any singular points; and then take the advice of other Ministers in trying it. Expect not that he should humour you, and please your fancies, and say and do as you would have him. It is contrary, not only to all examples in any age of the Church, but to the office of Pastors, and Duties of the people (in Scripture) to guide their Pastors, and not to be guided by them, but to joyn with other Congregations on the Lords day, either in the forenoon or afternoon, as much as with their determined Parish or Congregation. Yet *Nazianzen* teacheth us, That he that thus despiseth his Pastor, is a vain man, and by reason of his presumption, a new *Dathan* or *Abiram*. And we complain to the Lord in the words of the same holy Father; that in all our sufferings this thing is the most ridiculous, and yet most to be pityed; that we are the same men that are injured and

Naz. Ep. 26

Naz. Ep. 31

and accuſed: For ſome men object one thing againſt us, others another, according as their either mind, or manners, or miſchievous paſſions do ſuggeſt; and the moſt favourable men to us, do neglect or contemn us; and after we have ſpent our ſtrength and ſpirits for their good, they caſt us aſide as vile and diſhoneſt veſſels. Thus *Nazianzen*, with whom we againe doe complaine, that the world ſeeketh not Paſtors, but Orators. And *Irenæus* before him, ſheweth us, that it is the duty of a faithfull Paſtor to ſtudy the Truth, and not Eloquence. I remember that *Sozomen* writeth that *Aetius* (the Eunomian Atheiſt) his Eloquence was ſo matchleſſe, that it made his errour impregnable. And *Euſebius* reporteth, that *Meletius* the Heretick, for his eloquence was called *Mel Atticum*, The hony of *Greece*. This I write, not for any evil eye I bear to them, that are graced with that gift of God: but that we muſt not with *Moſes* refuſe the meſſage from heaven, becauſe we are Βραδυγλωσσοὶ, and have no

Naz. Or. 32

Iren. Præf. l.1.n. 18.

Soz. l.4.c. 22.

*Euſ. l.7.c.*31

mo

ſo glib a tongue as others: nor with *Jonah* turn our back becauſe the work may ſeem ungrateful. If he ſend us to labor among thorns, yet have we a graciousMaſter; his work is good, his end wil ſatisfie us: We ſhall then have the grapes and figs, which thornes and thiſtles would not yeeld us. Only I beſeech every one to remember, that the complaints of Gods Meſſengers, though proceeding ſomewhat from heat of paſſion, are often ſeconded withdiſmal and dreadful effects. The childhood of the children that contemned *Eliſha* his Miniſtry, exempted them not from puniſhment, becauſe it reſtrain'd them not from ſin.

Ferem. 11. 22.

2 *King.* 2. 24.

§. 4. Hence it may appear, that the tying of our ſelves to the obſervation of Parochial Church-communion, doth not force any man to ſubmit to a weak Miniſter, when he might have a better. Chriſt hath taught us to ſeek after knowledg without the quenching of zeal; and to maintain zeale, without deſpiſing knowledge: To ſeek after truth in the way of Peace, and after Peace in the way of Truth; as knowing how

neere they dwell together. And in the practice of this duty *Auguſtine* ſaith Divinely, It is a farre leſſe ſin to be unlearned then unteachable.

Contra Acad. l. 3. c. 7. Chriſtian Concord. p. 35. & 36.

But for confirmation of this Aſſertion, I deſire the Reader to peruſe the diſcourſe of Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, whoſe words as my intended brevity doth not permit me to tranſcribe; So I note,

1. That the publick welfare and unity of Chriſtian Churches, is to be preferred before the pleaſure, yea, or edifying of any ſingle member; and what confuſion will follow the plucking up of Chriſts, and the Magiſtrates, and the Churches bounds.

2. If all the people may freely and lawfully joyn themſelves with that Church that hath the ableſt Teacher, then almoſt all the world muſt go to a few men, and leave the reſt; then *Barnabas* may be forſaken, if *Paul* be the chief ſpeaker; and then able mens Churches will grow to that bigneſs that they will be no Churches, the Matter being too big for the End and Form.

Act. 14.12

3. That Miniſters are Free-

men

men as well as the people; and therefore every mans desire must not deprive them of their Freedome; besides that, the Lord assigneth to every Pastor a freedome to instruct a portion of his people: Gods work must be done before our own; and the saving of souls and propagation of the Gospel, be preferred before our private comforts.

4. God hath more means then Ministerial abilities, to encrease mens graces, and procure their salvation: for he that keeps in Gods order under a meaner honest Minister, is like to be a more humble thriving Christian, then he that will break that order, under pretence of edification: but God usually chastiseth men for such disorders, as we may see in daily experience. For God suffereth the same professors (to our great hearts grief) to turn unto doctrinal or practical evils, for their breaking Gods Order, and the Churches Unity. The speciall work and duty required of every Minister, is to mind their people of their duty to God, and constantly to mind God, and soli-

Isa. 62.6. *Ephes.* 1.16 *Phil.* 1.3.4.

cite him for his people. And for this purpose, the Pastor (if faithfull) is not like the sword-fish, which carries a weapon, but no heart: nor like the children of *Ephraim*, who being harnessed and carrying bowes, wanted not courage, and turned back in the day of battel. O what readinesse and promptitude should there be in people to have communion with such Watchmen! The unwearied *Cant.* 4. 11 Minister of Christ travels through all the Gardens of Learning, and sucks something from every flower, that he may bring his vessels and treasures full of knowledg for the comfort of his hearers, but they will not hear. Not only *Naz. Orat.* 1. is his service and office sacred (for it is Μεσιτεία Θεῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, a Meditaion between God and man) but his person, his very lips, which *Basil* stileth χείλη τῦ Χριστῦ, *Basil. t.* 1 *in Psal.* 44. *Rom.* 10. 15 the Lips of Christ, as the Apostle termeth his feete beautiful.

§. 5. Addresse your selves then in the Armour of God, all you messengers of God, to fight hereafter with the enemies of God.

Event

Event hath ſealed Saint *Pauls* prophecie; The time is already come, men will not ſuffer wholeſome Doctrine. Uncharitable cenſures of ſtile, of method, of voice, of phraſe, of geſture, are but ſenſeleſſe imputations of the prophane multitude; far inferiour (if they were true) to the firſt flouriſhes of a combate in earneſt. The worldlings heavy cenſure condemneth down-right, both manner and matter, and the whole ſubſtance of your preaching. And for your perſons, you are not greater then *John* the Baptiſt and our Saviour; ſooner therefore ſhal ye want a World, then a Theater, wherein, though the beſt do favour you, by moſt be ſure to be counted, Περικαθάρματα, Παειψήματα, Ἀναθήματα, what not? piacular, peſtilential, execrable fellowes. All the filthy ſcoffes and ſlanders that Satans Scavengers can rake out of the ſinkes of all profeſſions, are thought over-clean to throw in their faces, who would make the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt to ſhine unto them. *Je-*

2 *Tim.* 4.3.

1 *Cor.* 4.12 13

2 *Cor.* 4 4

Hieron. Epiſt. ad Demetriadem.

rome ſaid truly, *Semper virtutibus contradicitur*, vertues are ſtill contradicted. Pretend the world what the world can, here is the head and the heart of the controverſie: Contrariety breeds Enmity, Enmity cauſeth Separation, and Separation ſuppoſeth danger (from the party avoided) of infection.

§. 6. But thou, O man of God, *Tu ne cede malis, ſed contra*

Rom. 12.21

audentior ito: be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Such an Antiperiſtaſis muſt encreaſe and enkindle zeale, if thy profeſſion depend not upon faſhion, and thy conſcience upon company. For though Gods powerful Spirit ſhould ſuſpend his operation, yet canſt thou not forget the reaſon of a man, and bruitiſhly be driven with the drove, much leſſe abandon common ſenſe; and without any motion of thine owne, like a nail in a wheel, only move as thou art moved, and turn as thou art turned. They who never once dreamed of ſalvation by Chriſt, held it not the leaſt part of their glory

glory to ſtirre a courſe like Antipodes, clean oppoſite to the liking of the multitude. He in *Plutarch* applauded, ſuſpected his ſpeech; Οὐ δὴ πᾶ τὶ κακὸν λέγων ἐμαυτὸν λέλυθα; Hath any bad ſpeech fallen from my mouth without my knowledge? And *Antiſthenes* commended, was afraid of his Deeds; Ἀγωνιῶ μὴ τὶ κακὸν ἐργασωμαι: I am in agony, leſt I have done ſome miſchiefe. What in them without the law was voluntary, the ſame the law of Chriſt (if wee belive *Auguſtine*) impoſeth upon us as neceſſary; *Recuſas eſſe in corpore, ſi non vis odium mundi ſuſtinere cum Capite:* thou refuſeſt to be in the body, if thou wilt not ſuffer the hatred of the world with thy Head. Sure the currant credit of the godly in *Gregory* his time, was, *perverſorum rogatio, vitæ noſtræ approbatio*: Wicked mens detraction, is the approbation of our lives. And in all times the rebuke of Chriſt, was the Religion of Chriſtians. And as for our way of preaching, the Reverend Provincial Aſſembly

Phocion apud Plut. Laert. in Antiſt.

Auguſt. in Joan. tract. 87.

Greg. in Ezek. Homil. 9.

Heb. 11. per totum.

Vindication of *London*, doth piouſly and judi-
ſet forth ciouſly complaine, that though
Nov. 2. wee are farre from juſtifying
1649. *page* any indiſcreet or paſſionate ex-
82 preſſions, yet we conceive it to be very hard meaſure, to have our integrity arraigned and condemned for humane infirmities. And wee hope, we may without boaſting, ſay thus much; That the ſetled Miniſtry of *England* was never more cenſured, moleſted, impoveriſhed, and yet never more pious, peaceable, and painfull. Wherefore, that I may not number up numberleſs encouragements, ſtand upon your guard within the limits of your daily warfare with the world; ſince faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Only conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners. *Deus Pater Agonothetes, Xyſtarches Spiritus ſanctus, Epiſtates Jeſus Chriſtus; Corona æternitatis, bravium; Angelicæ ſubſtantiæ politia in cœlis, gloria in ſecula ſeculorum.* He that hath ſaid, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, *Joh* 16. 33. He is both Commander and ſpectator

1 *John* 5. 4

Heb. 12 3

Tertul. ad Martyras, cap. 3.

ſtator of your combate, He is both Judge and Rewarder of your courage, and conquerour of your enemie; *He will give you the Crowne of glory that fadeth not away.*

CHAP. XI.

Thirdly, Other imaginary, and imaginated Pretences are anſwered.

§. 1. ALthough all Divine Truths be precious, yet controverſies are ſo diſtaſtefull to me, that I reſolved againſt them. But he that made us, muſt rule us: and he that putteth us into the Vineyard, muſt meaſure out our work: and commandeth me to ſpeak briefly to the ſubſequent objections. For this is another Office of holy diſcipline: *Non ſolum bona offendere,*

Tert. Apolog. c. 39. ſed *mala refutare*: Not only by ſound doctrine to exhort, but likewiſe to convince the gainſayers, *Tit.* 1. 9.

§. 2. Firſt, Some ſay, they ſeparate from a determined Church-communion, becauſe of diverſity of doctrine; as if they knew not where to find the truth. It is true, *Solomon* complaineth, That men have ſought many inventions or imaginations; as in other things, ſo likewiſe in Doctrine, whereby men are drawn from the ſimplicity of their Creation. The Apoſtle likewiſe complaineth of a wind of doctrine, whereby Chriſtians began to be blown from the ſtedfaſtneſſe of the Truth. *Auguſtine* ſaith, that Satan ſeeing that Idolatrous images would downe, he bent his whole device in place of them to erect divers imaginations; that people in ſtead of images, might bow down to theſe, and worſhip them. Since which, it hath been his daily practice, either to broach divers and ſtrange doctrines never heard of before: or to revive the old, and new dreſſe them;

Eccleſ. 7. ult.

Eph. 4. 14.

Auguſt. de civ. Dei lib. 18. cap.

Heb. 13. 9.

2 Cor. 2. 17

and

and to mingle them (for that by themſelves they wil not utter) with the Apoſtolical doctrine, that ſo he might vent them. And this indeed is the diſeaſe of our age; and the juſt complaint we make of it. There hath good diſpatch been made of images; but imaginations in their ſtead, are deifi-ed and worſhiped, carrying the Name and Credit of Apoſtolick Doctrine. To prevent this miſ-chief, We are no where commanded to Separate from Church-communion; but to try the ſpi-rits; to prove all things; to hold faſt that which is good: and that we may do that, we are to pray, that he would open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of his Law; and to pray for knowledge and underſtanding, and to endeavour to have our ſenſes exerciſed to diſcerne both good and evil. The advice that *Syſinnius* preſented to the Empe-rour *Theodoſius* (ſtudying how to put an end to the differences in diverſity of Doctrine, that then troubled the Church) was to a-void all diſputations with Secta-ries,

1 *John* 4.1.
1 *Theſ* 5.21
Pſal. 119.18
Heb. 5.14.
Sozom. l. 7. *c.* 12.

ries, and to demand of them (when they petitioned him) whether they would ſtand to the judgement of ſuch as were Teachers in the Church, before it was divided? eſpecially, where their judgment diſſented not from the Scriptures. Ancient Fathers thought it meet, that they that would take upon them to interpret the Scriptures, ſhould put in ſureties, that the ſenſes they gave, ſhould be no other then the Church in former time had acknowledged. All that came after the Apoſtles, are commanded to labour for knowledg and learning, and not to utter their own imaginations, or do deſire to be believed upon their bare word: for that were to have dominion of their Auditors Faith. *Say I this of my ſelfe?* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *ſaith not the Law this alſo?* Give I this ſenſe of mine own head, or hath not Chriſts Church heretofore given the like? Which one courſe if it were ſtrictly kept, would rid our Church of many falſe imaginations, which now are ſtampt daily, becauſe every man upon his owne

Bp. Andrewes Ser. Worſhip imaginat.

1 *Theſ.* 5 12
1 *Tim.* 5 17
1 *Cor.* 9. 8.

owne ſingle bond is truſted to deliver the meaning of any Scripture.

§. 3. Secondly, Others pretend, that they ſeparate from Church-communion for neglects and corruption in diſcipline. For anſwer to this: I would they read what their own Mr. *Cotton* of New *England* writes: that the many notorious ſcandalous perſons that were found in the Churches of Iſrael, did only argue the neglect of Eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, in the toleration of ſuch publick ſcandals in the Church. And thus none of the men of God (who could not be ignorant of the Churches duty, and their ſin in ſuch neglects) ever attempted to Separate from that which was in this ſort faulty. All was not right in the exerciſe of diſcipline, in the Churches, planted by the Apoſtles. The Church of *Corinth* was cenſured as very faulty, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. So was the Church of *Smyrna*, *Revel.* 2. 14. No leſſe faulty was the Church of *Thyatyra*, *Rev.* 2. 20. Neither could the Church of *Sardis* be free, ſeeing the greateſt part were openly bad, there

Mr. *Cottons Holineſſe of Church-members* p. 21.

there being but a few that had not defiled their garments, *Rev.* 3. 4. And yet nothing heard by way of advice for any to make ſeparation, nor reproof for their holding up Communion, nor any one inſtance of a ſeparatiſt given. And here Mr. *Blake* ſheweth, that the godly non-conformiſts in England, who had a low opinion of the diſcipline then exerciſed, were ſo zealous againſt Church-ſeparation, that Mr. *Parker*, Mr. *Paget*, Mr. *Ball*, Mr. *Brightman*, and others, have left behind them large evidences of their zeale againſt ſeparation from Parochial Church Aſſemblies. It is more then ſtrange, that when the Apoſtles had by commiſſion from Chriſt planted Churches, and were to leave them to be propagated in future ages, yet would wholly be ſilent of this ſeparation, but leave us by our dark imaginations to diſcover it. In which, we are in danger to ſet our threſhold by Gods threſhold (of which hee ſadly complains;) or rather, juſtle our Gods threſhold with ours.

Mr. *Blake Covenant*, c. 31. p. 238.

Ezek. 43 8.

§ 4. Thirdly, Others pretend that

hat they ſeparate from Parochial Church-communion for prophaneneſſe of the people, and corruption in converſation. But neither both this admit of ſeparation, provided that Doctrine be ſuch in which men may have communion for Edification. If we look upon the people of *Iſrael* throughout the revolution of all times, we may find high Titles given them, even when they lived in all kind of ſin and Diſobedience. They had Titles given them of ſingular glory, by reaſon of priviledges, which they enjoyed by their call into church-fellowſhip, as, children of God, Gods peculiar ones, his portion, his heritage, the apple of his eye, and many the like Elogies: In the mean time their Qualificarions were as low, as their Titles high; their converſation no wayes anſwering their calling, but branded to be ſtiffnecked, of an Iron ſinew, an Adulterous, a Sinful Nation, a People fooliſh and unwiſe, as *Sodome* and *Gomorrah* unto the Lord: And yet the Prophets and righteous perſons keep their reſi-

Deut. 14. 12. *et* 32. 9. *Zach.* 2. 9. *Rom.* 9. 4. *Deut.* 9. 6. *et* 32. 6. *Iſa.* 1. 4. *et* 48. 4. *Ezech.* 32. 16.

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